Development of, Elicitation of and Response to Perceived Threat to Masculinity in Men: Review and Recommendations

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Abstract

The psychology of men and masculinity as a discipline promotes critical study of how gender shapes and constricts men's lives. This paper examines the creation and maintenance of perceptions of threat to masculinity in men. It includes a review of the past and current gender and masculinity literature in an attempt to understand the creation of a sensitivity to threat as well as how threat is elicited and maintained. Common male responses to threat are also examined. Finally, I discuss clinical implications and future directions for research on masculinity and threat to masculinity.

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Development of, elicitation of and response to perceived threat to masculinity in men: An overview of the existing literature and directions for future research

The psychology of men and masculinity is defined broadly as the study of how men's lives are influenced and shaped by gender, and by the process of masculinization, in both its socially constructed and biological forms. This is a relatively new discipline; Division 51, the Society of the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity was added to the American Psychological Association in 1995. Although it is a new discipline, scholarly work on this subject has been produced for quite some time but without being explicitly labeled as the psychology of men. Feminist psychologists have been examining the effects of gender and socialized constructions of gender on individual mental health for decades. The Society for the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity mission statement acknowledges debt to feminist-inspired scholarship on gender and declare a dedication to the empowerment of all persons beyond rigidly defined and restrictive gender roles.

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a selective review of the literature on masculinity construction and to outline how a predisposition to male perceptions of threat to masculinity may be created. I also outline how these perceptions of threat may be maintained an elicited and finally how men respond to perceptions of threat to their masculinity.

Before beginning any discussion of gender or masculinity construction, several points must be made. First, although research on gender is not new, the attempts to thoroughly define gender and gender roles have come about relatively recently. Many of the terms used to describe gender roles in gender research before the 1990s are vague, undefined and assume a common understanding and definition of gender roles. Many pre-1990s gender studies also appear to assume agreement on what are appropriate and inappropriate roles for males and

females. This assumption can create confusion as there is and likely always will be differences of opinion on what constitutes appropriate male and female behavior. Perhaps the recent push to define gender roles has come about as gains in the feminist movement begin to have an influence on social science research. It may no longer be enough to say what is appropriate or inappropriate without justification. For the sake of clarity, I will attempt to define terms throughout the paper as the various authors define them and also to point out when different terms are being used in essentially the same way. In some cases, however, even the authors have not clearly defined the terms they use.

What is Threat?

The first task in examining threat is determining how a fragile masculine identity is created or how men build a sensitivity to threat perception. The creation stage of threat perception is characterized by whether men *internalize* or only *recognize* the social ideals of masculinity. This is the stage where we must intervene and determine how preserving traditional masculinity becomes so vitally important for some men while other men seem rarely to be concerned about it. For internalizing men, the role that society prescribes for them becomes a fundamental part of their personality. They constantly compare themselves to and measure themselves by how well they fit the prescribed role. Other men recognize that society holds men to certain standards, choose the standards that they agree are important to maintain, and reject the others. These men recognize that there are standards for traditional masculinity but do not allow them to form the core of their identity. Therefore measuring up to those standards is not of much concern to them.

Theoretically, threat will be elicited in the internalizing men whenever there is a discrepancy between the societal prescription for masculinity and the males' perception of their

own masculinity. The elicitation stage of threat occurs when a male takes note of a discrepancy between appropriate societal masculinity and his own masculinity. For the internalizing male, this discrepancy will elicit feelings of inadequacy. For the non-internalizing male, however, the discrepancy may be noted and ignored because the value of those societal standards is not very high. In essence, threat is the feeling that the very core of one's identity is being judged and devalued for lack of compliance with appropriate social standards.

In this discussion of threat, I will first explore how a fragile masculine identity is created and the role of family in building a sensitivity to threat perception. Following that, I review how threat perception is elicited and maintained intra- and interpersonally, institutionally, and culturally. Finally, common responses to threat are reviewed followed by directions for intervention and future research.

Creation of a Fragile Masculine Identity: Building a Sensitivity to Threat Perception

THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER

In the literature, the mother's role in masculine identity development is often evaluated as a function of the father's role. In particular, maternal attitudes toward the father seem to be important in the personality development of the children. Biller (1971) reported that a factor contributing to the academic underachievement of some males was the mother's perception that their husbands were inadequate and incompetent. It makes sense that a son who is receiving the message from his mother that men are worthless would encounter an obstacle in his masculine identity development, particularly if pleasing the mother is important to the boy. This male may develop a sensitivity to the way his masculinity is judged by others that would create a predisposition to perceiving his masculinity as being threatened later in life. It is plausible that he may turn away from masculine pursuits in order to gain his mother's approval. Indeed, Sears

(1953) found that "kindergarten-age boys who took the feminine role in doll play had mothers who, among other things, were critical of their husbands" (cited in Biller, 1971, p. 229).

At least a couple of studies had as their theme the idea that a maternally-dominated home where the father is present impedes masculine development (Biller, 1971; Rosen & Teague, 1974). According to Biller (1971), "a serious problem that the young boy from a typical matriarchal family faces is that his mother often does not allow and/or encourage him to display competent behaviors" (p. 236). This is especially true if the mother has a negative attitude toward men or masculinity in general. Again, the boy in this situation may develop a fragile male identity that predisposes him to perceiving threats to his masculinity in many situations in life. If he feels as though his masculinity is continually degraded he may develop a sensitivity such that he begins to interpret ambiguous situations that he encounters as threatening to his masculine identity. This is the type of situation whereby a predisposition to perceiving threat is developed.

Mothers of father-absent boys were found to be less encouraging of masculine behavior than mothers of father-present boys (Biller, 1971). This is an instance in which it is unclear to what exactly Biller is referring when he uses the term "masculine behavior". He does at one point in his article refer to masculinity "of an aggressive acting-out nature" (p. 232). At another point he positions masculinity in opposition to timidity and a retiring nature but he fails to explicitly define masculine behavior. He suggests that, in homes where the father is present, his influence is more critical than the mother's in masculine development so a mother's somewhat negative attitude toward men may be outweighed by the father's strong modeling of masculinity (Biller, 1971). In these situations, the young son is able to observe how his father handles masculinity, including threats to masculinity. If the father handles masculinity

positively and does not become easily threatened, the son will likely be flexible in his masculinity as well and not develop a predisposition to threat perception. Supportingly, DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) found that sons who estimated their fathers' gender role strain to be high also reported being less emotionally attached to their fathers. The son may have felt that the father did not handle his masculinity positively and as a result, did not want to associate closely with his father. Their research is discussed in more depth later.

In the father-absent home, however, the mother is most critical in inhibiting or facilitating masculine development (Biller, 1971). Mothers who have a positive attitude toward males in general and consistently encourage masculine behavior in their sons help facilitate sex-role development. They send the message to their sons that masculinity is positive and do not threaten their sons' ability to display masculine behaviors. According to Biller (1971), mothers who reinforced aggressive and assertive behaviors had more masculine (again, possibly defined as more aggressive and less retiring) sons than mothers who discouraged this type of behavior.

Of course, it is important to point out that sons of mothers who discourage masculine behavior will not necessarily become feminine (opposite of masculine). As they enter school and encounter same-sex peers, home relationships become much less salient. The young male will have abundant opportunities to adopt masculine behaviors; however, this will undoubtedly create conflict at home where the mother is still discouraging these behaviors. The problem with this research lies in the attempts to salve the societal conscience by assuring that the boy will definitely find a way to become traditionally masculine. Whether he has to learn it in school or at home, he will eventually learn to act like a boy. Why is it necessary that the young

boy avoid everything feminine? And is it necessarily a positive transformation when the boy becomes more aggressive? I would argue that it may not be.

Biller (1971) reports that there are two directions mothering can take in the absence of the father: overprotection and rejection. Overprotection by the mother is common in families where the father is absent or ineffectual. The son of the overprotecting mother will probably be more timid and retiring while the son of the rejecting mother (who routinely ignores her children out of necessity of taking care of the single-parent household) will act out aggressively and display more masculine behaviors. Boys in both of these situations are at risk for developing a threatened masculine identity, but they act out in different ways. The distinction between these two is one way to explain the masculine development of sons in father-absent families. Sons whose mothers are overprotective depend on their mothers and do not learn to be masculine in the sense that they cannot take care of themselves and will not attempt to solve problems on their own. Here, masculinity is used to refer to independence and the ability to problem-solve on one's own. The son of the rejecting mother on the other hand, has no choice but to take care of himself and solve problems on his own because otherwise they will not be solved. His aggression may be explained by attempts to construct his own idea of masculinity pieced together by peers and media.

When Rosen and Teague (1974) examined case studies of boys displaying feminine behavior, they were primarily interested in the father's role in masculinity and femininity in the son. However, they did include some description of the mother's role in each of the families and a theme emerged. The four case studies presented in their article were seen over an extended period of time in their Gender Identity research clinic. These boys were brought into the clinic because of parental concerns about their displays of feminine characteristics. These

authors are also unclear in their definitions of masculinity and femininity although they discuss it quite frequently in the article. They do associate femininity with dressing in feminine clothing and attributes of gentleness, softness, delicateness, and passivity. What is perhaps most disturbing is the idea that these parents found it so loathsome that their sons displayed some feminine characteristics that they found it necessary to seek professional counseling.

In each case study, the mother was described as dominant, competent and strong. She was always the one in charge and the father generally deferred to her and allowed her to make all of the decisions. Phrases like "large and overbearing," "moderately aggressive," "powerful and unyielding," and "articulate, intelligent and un-feminine" were used to describe the mothers of these feminine sons. Although the researchers did not attempt to draw any conclusions about the mothers, some can clearly be drawn. Again, Rosen and Teague referred to these case studies as paradigmatic and not at all uncommon for the clients at their clinic. If this is the case, they seem to be describing an interaction between father parenting and mother parenting that is salient in the masculine development of the son. In this situation, the father is present but is demonstrating to the son inefficient ways of handling threats to masculinity. He is not showing that men can be strong and share an equal role in the house. He is demonstrating that the man is weak and must take a subordinate role to the mother. Later in life, some males who observed this interaction may feel threatened whenever a woman tries to assert some power. The interaction between weak fathering and strong mothering seems to contribute to the over-development of feminine qualities in young males. Perhaps when a young male observes the fact that his father is contributing very little to the family emotionally, he turns to his mother who is running the household and she becomes the role model. In an attempt to emulate her, he may develop feminine behaviors and personality characteristics.

The emergence of an interaction between mothering and fathering is not surprising. In fact, Moran and Barclay (1988) stated that appropriate sex-typing involves a child's interaction with both the mother and the father. I would argue that the idea of appropriate sex-typing is vague and problematic no matter what the makeup of the family. Young men may not have any idea what "appropriate" sex roles are. Forcing them to conform to arbitrary rules of appropriate gender role behavior that may change from person to person and institution to institution is not only confusing, but unfair. At some point, they may begin to feel threatened by the fact that they never quite fit the constantly-morphing definition of masculinity.

There has not been much recent empirical research on the relationship between mothers and their sons' gender identity development.

In her 1994 book, *Strong Mothers, Strong Sons*, Caron examines the relationship between mothers and the development of their sons. The main theme of her book is that mothers should have respect for the process of becoming masculine. By respecting the process, Caron is referring to giving sons time to construct their masculinity, not forcing him to express himself before he is ready, and allowing him to construct his masculinity in an environment free from stereotypes and pressure. She encourages mothers to respect their sons as unique individuals while being firm and supportive. She says that mothering a son requires being tough when necessary but also that maternal warmth plays a role in male identity development. She says that mothers can model the successful integration of head and heart to guide their sons toward a more balanced masculinity that includes sensitivity and respect for women. Caron believes strongly that mothers should teach sons to be assertive not aggressive and encourage them to find alternative ways of relating to others.

THE ROLE OF THE FATHER

There is considerable controversy in the literature as to what role the father plays in the son's development of a masculine identity. It does become clear in the research though that directly or indirectly fathers do play a role in the development of sex-typed behaviors (Russell, 1978; Santrock, 1977).

Most of the research that has been done compares the masculine identities of father-absent boys with father-present boys. There has been a great deal of variation in the findings of studies where the father is physically absent. Mitchell and Wilson (1967) posited that the result of male role model deprivation (father absent) is a sense of masculine identity ambiguity that may in extreme cases lead to violent, destructive, or aggressive acts that they characterized as compulsive masculinity. Similarly, in a study by Santrock (1977) ten- and eleven-year old boys from broken homes (those in which no father was present) were classified as more masculine, aggressive, and independent than boys with fathers present in their homes. This classification lead Santrock to conclude that the father's presence in the home is not necessary for the son to develop masculine sex-typed behaviors. He does not explicitly define masculinity but speaks of it in association with aggressiveness and independence. Although many researchers agree that young boys can be successful in developing masculine identity without the presence of a father, they often disagree about why. Here it becomes confusing to understand exactly what is meant by the successful development of masculine identity, but at least one study implicitly defines it as the avoidance of compulsive masculinity, "a reaction formation which is expressed by violent, destructive, and aggressive acts" (Mitchell & Wilson, 1967, p. 1173).

Mitchell and Wilson (1967) attribute the development of masculine sex-typed behaviors to the son's rebellion against the absence of the father that leads to a drive to fill the role that the father left void. Others believe that in the absence of the father, the mother becomes the

primary role model, which results in the development of feminine characteristics for some boys (Moran & Barclay, 1988). They say that "femininity" in boys may take the form of passivity, dependency and poorly developed aggressivity. For these boys, masculine sex-typed behaviors develop out of the need to compensate for these feminine characteristics. I would agree that either of these explanations is plausible and add that developing a predisposition to threat may be most likely in situations where the father is absent, but only if the mother displays negative attitudes toward masculinity. What I believe is unfortunate is the use of aggressivity as a criterion by which masculinity is measured. It is possible, and in some cases preferable for a masculine boy to passive and non-aggressive. When the mother is positive towards masculinity, the son will likely be comfortable displaying masculine behaviors and not perceive illusory threats.

Kitahara (1975) cited studies of sailors' sons that showed they were dependent and infantile compared with other boys in their social class. Similarly, boys with fathers absent during WWII lacked aggressiveness and tended to think and behave like girls (undefined, but related to acting "infantile") in the absence of their male role model. Like Moran and Barclay (1988), he believes that this was because the mother became the primary role model but the outcome was not extreme masculinity, instead it was the opposite-femininity.

Reason for the father's absence also seems to be significant in masculine identity development. Santrock (1977) found that boys from divorced homes were more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors than those from widowed homes. Santrock gives as reasoning that the mother is more likely to present the male model in a negative manner in a divorce situation than if the father is deceased. Another likely explanation is that the son himself sees the absent male model in a negative light since fathers sometimes have a tendency to become

emotionally distant from their children after a divorce (Vacc, DeVaney, & Brendel, 2003). It might also be interesting to consider the subjective analysis that the son gives to the divorce. If he perceives that his father was weak or couldn't handle the rigors of married life, he may construct his own masculinity as weak and become sensitive to female dominance, perceiving that there is always a chance they may take over. Conversely, if he believes that the marriage just didn't work out and assigns no blame, this sensitivity would be unlikely to develop.

There is also considerable research examining the quality of father-present relationships and the effect of these relationships on the son's masculine identity. A lot of this research suggests that if the father is present at all, any behavior he models becomes salient to the son and is crucial in the development of the masculine identity (e.g., Haigler, Day, & Marshall, 1995; Lisak, 1991; Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001; Russell, 1978; Santrock, 1977). In some cases, the existing literature suggests that the father's sense of masculinity is directly and positively correlated with the son's (Bronson, 1959), whereas some studies insist that there is a negative association or none at all (Haigler, et al., 1995; Lynn, 1976). Lynn (1976) found no relationship between the masculinity of fathers and that of their sons, while Bronson (1959) found that the masculinity of the father and son was correlated only in nonstressful homes. If the homes were under stress, the masculinity of fathers and sons showed a strong negative correlation: the more masculine the father, the more feminine the son. So again the effect of the father on the son's masculinity tends to be very dependent on the quality of the relationship between father and son. Again, I would propose that the son's subjective evaluation of the father's masculinity is what becomes most salient. If the father is dominant or overly masculine and the son identifies that as the cause of many problems, he may turn away from that

construction. If he evaluates the father's masculinity as positive, he is likely to try to emulate that positivity.

It is here that father absence must again be addressed but on an emotional as opposed to physical level. Studies on the relationship of physically present fathers with their sons have examined the effect on masculine identity development when the father is emotionally absent. Rosen and Teague (1974) presented four case studies of boys who exhibited feminine behavior in an examination of how fathers contribute to the development of masculinity in their sons. The main theme across all four cases was that the emotional absence of the father contributed to the feminine traits in the son. The fathers in all cases, although present, were inhibited, passive and usually under the tight control of the wives. The conclusions drawn from this study seem to contradict those of Bronson (1959) which suggested a negative correlation between the masculinity of the father and son in stressful homes. In this study, the father's weak, passive (more feminine) personality was said to contribute directly to the feminine behaviors of his son. The fathers all displayed few strong, masculine qualities and had strong psychological investments outside of the family. In all of the cases presented in the Rosen and Teague (1974) study, the father is a "psychologically ineffective member of the family" (p. 979). The highlighting of these particular case studies, which the authors argue are paradigmatic and by no means isolated instances seems to suggest that the development of a masculine identity depends on the proper modeling of such an identity by the father. I assume that "proper modeling" would be modeling whereby the father demonstrates stereotypically masculine behaviors although this is undefined as well. Without this modeling, these authors suggest, the son is doomed to display significant gender confusion.

Another important component in the quality of father-son relationships is father nurturing. Lynn (1976) found that nurturing fathers indirectly contributed to masculinity in their sons. When the father was the dominant disciplinarian but was also affectionate to his son, the son gave more masculine preferences[1] on a questionnaire. Conversely, if the father dominated without affection, the son was much less masculine in preference. In this case a son's preferences were categorized as masculine according to the extent to which he identified with his father more strongly than his mother. This lends further support to Bronson's (1959) conclusion that there is a negative correlation between father masculinity and son masculinity in stressful homes. One could make the case that a home dominated without affection is stressful and in these homes, says Lynn, the son is less likely to develop a strong masculine identity. In cases where the father dominates with affection, a son sees modeled a more well-rounded form of masculinity, one in which a variety of roles and emotions are displayed. Sons who observe this well-rounded masculinity will likely not develop a predisposition to threat perception because they feel the freedom to express themselves in many different ways. They will learn to feel comfortable displaying behaviors that are stereotypically feminine.

More recent research has been conducted by DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) examining the relationship between son's development of masculine identity and father's gender role strain. They believe that son's perception of his father's gender role strain is important for two reasons. First, social learning theory dictates that behaviors are learned through modeling and so from a gender perspective, the same-sex parent plays an important role in the development of gender roles. Another reason DeFranc and Mahalik believe that this is important is that a son's perception of his father's gender role strain may be related to a weaker attachment to his

[1] The researchers used imitation tasks (e.g., child picks a starting point on a maze after adult) to score the preferences. For example, if they imitated the female, then their preferences were scored feminine

father and increased psychological separation. Fathers may struggle with conflict between work and family and spend less time with the children, they may communicate using the "appropriate" masculine emotion of anger, or they may refrain from physical affection for fear of appearing homosexual. Fathers may also compete with their sons instead of cooperating with them if they are experiencing strain because competition is a more masculine dynamic than cooperation.

The authors hypothesized that men's own gender role strain and their estimates of their fathers' gender role strain would be associated with less positive emotional attachment to and more separation from both mother and father. They found support for the hypothesis that men's own gender role conflict and stress would be related to less positive emotional parental attachment. They also found that son's gender role stress was strongly related to psychological separation from both parents and the son's estimates of his father's gender role conflict and stress was negatively related to attachment. It may be that a son who observes his father's perception of threat regularly may come to reject his father as a role model and thus become less attached to him. The authors also found that sons' and fathers' estimated gender role conflict and gender role stress was substantially related. When a father experiences gender role conflict or stress, his son may observe his stress and be influenced. Men who see threatened fathers may then become threatened as well. Through observation of his father's conflicts, the son may decide that traditional masculinity is not preferable for him and go in search of a model of an alternative form of masculinity. He may in turn experience conflict when he either cannot find such a model or when he is confronted with society's preference for traditional masculinity, a masculinity he himself rejected.

Fischer and Good (1998) also found that sons who reported a more secure attachment to their fathers reported being more comfortable expressing emotions and reported feeling less stress regarding intellectual inferiority and performance failure. It is possible that these sons who are close to their fathers have seen a masculinity modeled that includes emotional expressiveness and precludes devaluing and competition. If this is the case, then these sons may be less likely to perceive threats in other environments because they may be more secure with themselves. In essence, they are not threatened by having someone in a dominant position over them because they were not made to feel inadequate in the subordinate position.

THE ROLE OF SIBLINGS

Much of the research on masculinity involves examining the modeling behavior of those seeking to develop a masculine identity. It also makes sense, then, to examine the role of older siblings since they tend to become models to younger siblings in the home (Vroegh, 1971). Wohlford, Santrock, Berger and Liberman (1971) believe that young boys in father-absent homes tend to look for a surrogate male model upon which to base their masculine identity and that the potential surrogate existing most often in the home is the older brother. Although they found that the presence of the father is much more significant than the presence of an older brother, in the absence of the father, the older brother sometimes assumed part of the responsibility for that role.

As seems to be the common thread of masculinity research, there have been differing conclusions on the importance of older male siblings. Vroegh (1971) found that the presence of like-sex siblings whether older or younger had no effect on participants' masculinity or femininity. Although this result was significant, it comes with the drawback that there was no precise measurement of masculinity and femininity. Instead, teachers subjectively rated the

boys and girls in their class and the boys and girls subjectively rated each other. In the case study research by Rosen and Teague (1974), several of the gender-confused, young boys had older sisters who routinely reinforced feminine behaviors, lending support to the idea that same-sex siblings may reinforce gender-appropriate behavior while opposite-sex sibling may cause gender-confusion. I would argue that boys with older sisters may not feel the strong pressure to conform to stereotypical gender roles and may instead take advantage of the opportunity to construct a well-rounded identity that includes both masculine and feminine qualities. Young boys who take advantage of this opportunity are less likely to become sensitive to perceptions of threat to their masculinity since they understand that masculinity can be constructed in many ways.

In another well-dated study, Wohlford, et al. (1971) found that children from father-absent families who have one or more older male siblings are significantly more aggressive, less intensely dependent, and less frequently dependent than children who do not have older male siblings. In their study, the presence of older female siblings made no difference on the observed effects. What is perhaps the most significant finding in this study from an adjustment perspective is that the presence of an older brother made the child more like a child from a father-present family.

Another important piece of sibling research examines birth order effects on masculine identity development. In their 1971 study, Farley, Hatch, Murphy and Miller hypothesized that firstborn males would be more masculine since firstborns tend to be more socially conforming and would receive little social reinforcement for feminine tendencies. Surprisingly, the researchers found no support for that hypothesis; in fact they found just the opposite. There was a slight tendency for firstborn and only child males to be more feminine in personality

characteristics. Perhaps these firstborns were more aware of the social pressure to display stereotypical gender behaviors but not necessarily influenced by this pressure. Maybe by being more aware of social situations, they were also more aware of the different representations of masculinity around them. They may have become less sensitive to perceptions of threat because of this awareness.

THE ROLE OF FAMILY DYNAMICS

The effects of the dynamics of the family on the development of the son's masculinity are difficult to identify in isolation from the effects of parents, siblings, and social factors. Certainly more research is needed to examine the link between household relationships and the development of masculinity. That being said, much of what is out there discusses the relationship between the sex-role development of the parents and that of their children. Klein and Shulman (1981) discuss the importance of family for supplying the child with a model for identification with sexual and parental roles. Although few would argue against the idea that a child's personality is influenced by the relationship of the parents, Klein and Shulman go on to say that only when the parents fill their respective gender-linked roles is the child able to identify with the parent of his own sex. I would argue that there is more flexibility than that. As we have noted above and supported by the research of Kurdek and Siesky (1980), "parent and child sex-role self-concepts are not directly related to each other" (p. 259). Children quite often look to other sources when constructing gender identity and it is an oversimplification to so closely link the sex-role self-concepts of parents and children. In contrast, DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) found a strong relationship between sons' and fathers' estimates of their gender role conflict. However, they also found that boys who estimated their fathers' gender role strain

to be high also reported that they were not as attached to their fathers. These boys are examples of sons who might look to other sources in gender construction.

Klein and Shulman (1981) found that "the masculinity-femininity of adolescents is more appropriate when their parents have a good marital adjustment or when their parents, as a couple, assume a more appropriate model of masculinity-femininity, with the father more masculine and the mother more feminine" (p. 48). Again I would argue that these findings could be explained much more readily by marital adjustment perspective than by a gender-role perspective. Remember that Bronson (1959) found that the masculinity of sons was correlated with their father's masculinity only in nonstressful homes. I would argue that a home in which one's married parents have a good marital adjustment would be less stressful and that might provide the better explanation for Klein and Shulman's findings. They are also vague in the wording of their results. They argue that the "masculinity-femininity of adolescents is more appropriate..." (p. 48). What is appropriate? Androgyny, developing both masculine and feminine characteristics, could be considered preferable to bipolar identification as either masculine or feminine. For example, Bem (1974) argued that people should be encouraged to exhibit both feminine and masculine behaviors as the situation dictates. Observing parents who fill roles such that the mother is strictly feminine and the father is strictly masculine may produce an environment such that the children are strictly confined to such roles too, but some might argue that this is hardly to be considered "appropriate."

Another family dynamics topic that is addressed in the literature is divorce. For whatever reason, boys are more vulnerable than girls to stresses related to divorce and recover from any difficulties more slowly (Krantz, 1988). Although there is no conclusive research that addresses this topic, Krantz posits that boys are more likely than girls to live in a household

headed by the opposite sex parent and that this may cause them some distress. Sons may feel threatened living in a home where they are consistently dominated by a woman, especially as they get older. There is always the possibility that this threat associated with women in charge may persist throughout childhood and long into adulthood, creating a predisposition for the perception of threat in interactions with dominant women.

Kurdek and Siesky (1980) found that boys from divorced homes headed by mothers are less masculine, but that this is due to a trend toward the androgynous, not a trend toward the feminine. In fact, they found that divorced mothers and fathers tend to describe themselves in androgynous terms. The researchers hypothesize that this could be due to the fact that single parents may have to take on characteristics of the absent parent in order to effectively rear their children. This can hardly be considered a handicap for the children or the parents since androgynous individuals generally display higher levels of self-esteem, social competence, and behavioral flexibility than predominantly masculine or predominantly feminine individuals (Kurdek & Siesky, 1980).

Fischer and Good (1998) explored the relationship between men's gender role conflict and men's perceived quality of relationship with their parents. Interestingly, they found that men who perceived themselves as having more conflictual relations with their parents also experienced more stress regarding being subordinate to a woman. They appeared to view women as more dominating. The authors also explain that it is possible that in conflictual family situations men may learn that they are vulnerable when they let others have power over them. After having experienced such conflict, men may develop a predisposition to feeling threatened whenever they are in a situation where someone else has power over them, particularly if that situation is one in which men would traditionally be dominant (e.g., work).

Indeed, Fischer and Good suggest that such men may try to compensate for their vulnerable masculinity (threat) by externalizing the conflicts through traditionally masculine activities such as athletics, substance abuse, and sexual conquest.

In summary, the development of a predisposition to threat is may be associated with family interactions. Mothers who degrade or dominate masculinity in the home may send the message to their sons that they are worthless, contributing to the creation of a fragile masculine identity. Fathers, whether they are physically present or not, must be psychologically present and effectual in order to provide an image of masculinity to their sons. Although, there is not necessarily a correlation between father and son masculinity, the way the father parents his son (affectionately or non-affectionately) can be very influential in how he develops his masculine identity. And, say DeFranc and Mahalik (2002), the way a son perceives his father's masculinity may be influential in the development of his own. The influence of siblings on masculine development is unclear, and more research should be done to determine how salient sibling interactions are in the development of masculinity. The role of family dynamics in the development of masculinity is also unclear. What is clear is that there is an interaction between the parenting of mothers and fathers and that this interaction is quite influential. The effects of the family dynamics are difficult to tease apart, however, and research is needed to define the role more clearly.

Eliciting and Maintaining a Fragile Masculine Identity: Perceiving Threat and Remaining Threatened

INTRAPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL CONTEXTS

Personality

The literature on the relationship between personality variables and masculinity is virtually nonexistent. What little that is available is indirect and widely varied in its conclusions. Perhaps the reason for the lack of research in this area is that researchers tend to view construction of masculinity and femininity from a sociocultural perspective and thus are hesitant to tie masculinity construction back to any specific personality traits. In the endeavor to create the most accurate picture of the many constructions of masculinity, it is important to consider the role played by personality.

One trait that has been examined in relationship with masculinity is the need for power. Hirschowitz (1987) defines power as, "the desire to have an impact on, to influence, or to control another person, group of people, or the world at large" (p. 575). As outlined by Hirschowitz, the power motive has at least four components: fear of weakness, fear of assertiveness, hope of power via weakness, and hope of power via assertiveness. According to her research, life circumstances influence how a need for power is expressed. Since her research involved female, not male, participants it is unclear as to what circumstances in a male's life might be influential on his expression of the power need.

Interestingly, Hirschowitz (1987) also explained that a high need for power may result in feelings of powerlessness as a result of negative past experiences trying to express the need for power directly. If a male with a high need for power expresses that need inappropriately and is rejected or shamed as a result, it is easy to understand that he may feel powerless to change his current position. A threatened masculine personality may result as he is confronted with the discrepancy between the power he feels is appropriate for him to wield as a male and the power he actually possesses. It is here where the four components also come in to the discussion.

There may be a resulting fear of assertiveness if the male is rejected in the manner just discussed and courses may change such that hope of power is sought via weakness.

Finally, a low need for power was correlated with high self-esteem. It is possible that these individuals are comfortable not being in control and as such, do not feel threatened in a subordinate position.

Traditionalism has also been examined in relationship to construction of masculinity. Nagoshi, Pitts, and Nakata (1993) reported that traditional masculinity in males may be associated with conservative attitudes. Gallagher and Smith (1999) conducted research focusing on Evangelicals in their examination of the negotiation of gendered ideals and choices regarding work and family. They reported that one hallmark of traditional evangelical Protestantism is the "adherence to a neotraditionalism in which women are seen as subordinate to men" and a perpetuation of the idea that men and women should occupy separate spheres (p. 212). The researchers interviewed 130 church-going Protestants, two-thirds of whom identified themselves as evangelical. The great majority of those interviewed agreed with neotraditional rhetoric of gender and family responsibilities emphasizing male headship as the core. Most admitted belief that women and children ought to defer to men and that it is the job of the male as head of the household to protect the family and take financial responsibility. Although there tended to be some contradiction when it came to how men should exert their authority as leader, there was little ambiguity in the feeling that the male should be the leader. For males who endorse this belief, not having the lead in a marriage may result in the creation of a predisposition for threat perception. It is similar to the discussion above of mothers and female teachers. If it is rooted in their concept of masculinity that they should be head of the household and are not in that position, threat may be elicited in any situation in which a woman is

dominant. These situations include the household, the workplace, or any others where the man feels dominance is his rightful position.

Another topic that could use greater attention in masculinity research is social dominance. Social dominance orientation (SDO) is "the extent to which one desires that one's in-group dominate and be superior to out-groups" (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994, p. 742). Whitley (1999) explains that people high in SDO are protective over the social and economic benefits that they possess as a result of being in a dominant position in society. They do not want members of the out-group to share in these benefits and as a result, they tend to hold negative attitudes toward any groups that fight for equality (Whitley, 1999). These groups include but are not limited to, women, gay and lesbian people, and ethnic minorities. SDO is reflected more in negative attitudes toward out-group equality than in negative affect toward members of the out-group, however, since the main focus for these individuals is maintaining the dominant status. Perhaps men who are high in SDO feel socially entitled to dominate women and hold negative attitudes toward women as a group if they perceive that group as trying to dominate them. They may feel threatened by attempts to take away what they believe is rightfully theirs, wealth, status, or power.

In a similar vein, Hill and Fischer (2001) investigated the link between masculine gender roles and both general and sexual entitlement in men. General entitlement in men is described as the feeling that what men want should take precedence over the needs of women, while sexual entitlement is more specifically, the belief that men have strong sexual needs that must be satisfied and that they are entitled to act out sexual impulses (Hill & Fischer, 2001). Another purpose of their research was to determine whether a link existed between entitlement and rape-related behaviors and attitudes. They found that masculinity factors predicted both

men's general sense of entitlement and sexual entitlement. Further, they found that both general and sexual entitlement predicted an array of rape-related attitudes and behaviors. Men who believe that they are entitled to have their general and their sexual needs met by women without question may be particularly susceptible to feeling threatened as many women may be unwilling to satisfy the needs of someone who shows so little concern for their needs. In turn, the threatened male, feeling entitled to have his needs met, may develop a "by any means necessary" attitude and endorse rape as a means for satisfying his needs.

Tokar, Fischer, Schaub, and Moradi (2000) hypothesized that individual differences in masculine gender role conflict and stress were related to personality as organized by the five-factor model. They found support for their hypotheses; personality and the combined set of masculine gender role conflict and stress had 60 % overlapping variance. They hypothesized that the negative affect related to gender role conflict and stress would relate them positively to neuroticism, and their findings supported this hypothesis. They also predicted and found inverse relations between openness and masculine gender role conflict and stress, possibly because part of the problem men have in adhering to traditional gender roles is the inability to talk about and solve their emotional problems. Agreeableness was found to be inversely related to masculine gender role conflict. The researchers suggest that maybe men who are more cooperative than competitive do not feel as pressured to subscribe to society's strict standard of manhood and thus experience less conflict. Both conscientiousness and extraversion were found to have positive relations with masculine gender role variables. These results can be interpreted similarly. Perhaps men who are more extraverted and men who are more agreeable tend to place great importance on others' evaluation of them. If this is the case, they may experience more gender role conflict and stress if they feel that they fail to measure up to the

standards of others. More research is certainly needed to understand the complex relationship of personality and masculine gender role conflict and stress.

Family

Most of the literature that examines the male role in the family is centered around a discussion of the male as provider (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995; Cohen, 1993; Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant, 2002). The traditional father focuses on achievement by providing material support for his family and there has tended to be a overemphasis on work outside the home. The problem is that men today are experiencing gender role conflict as they struggle to maintain their role as provider in spite of the fact that most families have become dual-income. Men who endorse traditional gender beliefs may feel that the father should dominate the home but, in actuality, men can no longer exercise these rights because they are no longer the sole provider. For men who still endorse these traditional beliefs, threat may be elicited as he realizes that his wife is bringing home a paycheck and wants to exert some dominance as well. Women have gained some power in the world and are now expecting that men contribute to the child care and family work. Men are experiencing gender role conflict as they struggle to enact a traditional fathering role that is unsuited to the needs of today's families.

After interviewing fathers for his study, Cohen (1993) found that few men really advocated the ideology of the father-provider role and many saw the fathering experience as stretching beyond work. For example, they believed that the responsibility of being a father also included spending time with the children. Contrarily, Silverstein, Auerbach and Levant (2002) found that a large percentage of the men involved in their study preferred to avoid "sissy stuff" and refused to share equal responsibility for child care. Again there is always within-group variability that must be accounted for. This variability lead Cohen (1993) to the

conclusion that although some say that fathering is changing and a new type of involved father is emerging, this new father has failed to completely replace the father-breadwinner model or challenge its position of cultural dominance. Indeed, Silverstein and Auerbach (1999) argue that the commitment to breadwinning, rather than being replaced for both parents, has now transferred to women as well since 48% of married women report providing half or more of the family income. Thus, it is not that the father-breadwinner model is losing out to a more father-involved model in the modern family, but instead that both parents are now struggling to handle work-family conflicts. The majority of heterosexual men no longer have housewives to shoulder all of the household responsibility (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999).

Traditional men may expect their wives to forfeit their activities and goals for their husband's career and assist in a variety of social, technical, and administrative capacities (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995). If she fails or refuses to do this, her husband may perceive her as trying to advance above or overpower him and consequently experience threat to his prescribed position as dominator.

Silverstein, Auerbach and Levant (2002) point out that there is nothing inherently wrong with a male's desire to be a good role model and provider for his family. It is when he perceives that he is not fulfilling his role or perceives that his family believes that he is not fulfilling his role that he may experience threat to his masculinity.

Intimate Relationships

Another interpersonal arena where men may be confronted with situations which elicit threat is within the context of intimate heterosexual relationships. Some men believe that enacting their gender role requires decisive and competitive behavior, power and control strategies, and the curtailing of all emotional expression except anger (Franchina, Eisler, &

Moore, 2001). A man with a strongly traditional gender role ideology may expect to exert control over his female partner because he believes that that is the proper gender dynamic for the relationship. Franchina, Eisler, and Moore (2001) point out that her refusal to go along with these demands may threaten the enactment of the masculine gender role and cause the male a significant amount of stress. As a result of this increased level of stress, the male may begin to attribute negative properties to the female who he perceives is the source of the stress (Eisler, Franchina, Moore, Honeycutt, & Rhatigan, 2000; Franchina, et al., 2001). Increased negative affect toward his female partner is likely to contribute to further problems within the relationship.

Gender-relevance versus gender-irrelevance also affects how likely men are to perceive threats to their masculine role. Franchina et al. (2001) explain that men who adhere strongly to masculine ideology may evaluate situations based on their relevance to enacting their masculine gender role. Examples of situations that may be evaluated as gender relevant are competitive situations, and those that involve physical strength, self-reliance, and endurance. Men who are challenged by women in these situations may perceive threats to their masculinity more readily than would men in situations that are gender-irrelevant. For example, a man who is beaten in a game of basketball by his female partner may feel threatened, whereas, a man whose female partner can cook better than he can would likely not feel threatened. Supportingly, Lash, Eisler and Southard (1995) and Lash, Gillespie, Eisler, and Southard (1991) had college men immerse one hand in ice water (cold pressor task) and found that men who were told that the length of time of immersion was related to masculine traits kept their hand in the water longer than those who were told it was related to feminine traits or had nothing to do with gender at all. These results suggest that performance in gender-relevant

situations differs from performance in gender-irrelevant situations. One implication of this research is that men may not respond so competitively if the salience of gender is removed from the situation. For example, being dominated by a woman in a sport or career would not be so threatening if men were not socialized to believe that they should dominate in these areas.

Female threat and gender relevance versus gender-irrelevance also interact. The results of the 2000 study by Eisler, et al. showed that negative attributions and reports of negative affect toward women were greater in masculine gender-relevant situations than in gender-irrelevant situations. They posit that men who adhere to an exaggerated masculine ideology respond more strongly to negative feedback from a woman. For men, having a woman win at her own game perhaps is not threatening, whereas having her win at a man's game is extremely threatening. Men are supposed to be dominant and successful in competitive situations. Traditionally, women should be passive and yielding. If a woman wins at a man's game, not only is she winning, but she is violating proper gender dynamics. This violation may cause very negative affect toward the female. Indeed, Eisler and Skidmore (1987) demonstrated that the most gender role stress-producing situations for men are those in which they perceive themselves to be: (1) physically inadequate, (2) emotionally expressive, (3) subordinate to women, (4) intellectually inferior, or (5) performing inadequately. Losing to a woman could realistically cause a man to experience several of these situations at once. If a man loses to a woman in basketball, he may simultaneously perceive himself to be physically inadequate, subordinate to a woman, and performing inadequately. For men high on gender role stress, any challenge by a woman may be threatening; one in which the woman wins may then produce significant stress and negative attitudes toward her. This is an important process to understand because negative affect toward women has been implicated as one factor leading to men's

physical and sexual abuse of women (e.g., Lackie & de Man, 1997; Copenhaver, Lash, & Eisler, 2000).

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

Education

In recent years, a controversy has erupted in the schools. Are the schools serving boys as well as they are serving girls? (For an overview, see Foster, Kimmel, & Skelton, 2001) Many argue that they are not, that the skills necessary for doing well in school are skills that girls possess naturally and boys have difficulty learning. It should also be argued that if girls are only using skills in school that they already possess, then they are being underserved as well School should be challenging and rewarding for both boys and girls. When the controversy first erupted, feminism was blamed for the damage done to boys (Foster et al., 2001). Although researchers have begun to adopt a more diplomatic approach to studying the problem that relies less on finger-pointing, the issue remains one of girls versus boys as opposed to how to make education more efficient for both girls and boys. Skelton (2001) summarizes the men's rights advocates position as the belief that there are more female teachers than male teachers and feminine teaching and learning styles are employed in schools (Skelton, 2001). Clearly schools will never serve boys or girls as well as they should when researchers cannot agree on what is actually the problem.

According to Francis and Skelton (2001), schooling is associated with sexuality on two levels: through government policies and as a site where sexual and gendered identities are constructed on a daily basis. Feminists have identified how boys and girls construct their gender positions by adopting attitudes that are in opposition to each other (Skelton, 2001). This perspective argues that gender is relational and boys construct their masculinity by positioning

themselves as "other" to the girls. What is most salient in this argument is the idea that school is a place where rules are set in order to shape students according to social norms. When boys begin to feel that it is okay to display oppressive attitudes and behaviors toward girls in school, they are also getting the idea that oppression forms the core of masculinity. In fact, schools often set up dichotomies to separate masculine from feminine, which MacInnes (1998) warns we must be careful not to tie too closely to sex differences. Masculinity constructs rationality to contradict the emotionality associated with femininity, strength over frailty, competition over cooperation, mind over body, science over the arts, and even independence over dependence (Francis & Skelton, 2001). Reichert (2001) argues that separating boys from the feminine is often a powerful feature in the design of a school. For boys, being valued in school depends on running fast, acting cool, being good at things, as well as not being unathletic, uncool, or inept which are seen as features of femininity or subordinate masculinity. The worst insult a male student can encounter is to have his attitudes and behaviors aligned with females. This is a very powerful socializing agent. Boys learn that when they don't follow the rules at school about what it means to be masculine they will be punished. Boys who are alienated early on as a result of not following these rules are at great risk for developing a threatened identity. They may develop a persisting sensitivity to other males' judgment of their masculinity. As a result of this sensitivity, they may even feel tremendous pressure throughout their lives to prove themselves in situations involving other men. What boys learn at school about how to be male becomes very salient for them, oftentimes even more salient than what they are learning at home. Indeed, according to Martino (2001), "boys are incited to adopt certain practices of masculinity and to display themselves as certain kinds of boys" (p. 44). That is why it is very important that young boys are receiving the right message at school.

Boys don't only learn about being masculine by positioning themselves as others to girls, but also by constructing a hierarchy of masculinity with some masculinities subordinate to others. Hegemonic masculinity legitimizes patriarchy, mobilizes around physical strength, adventurousness, emotional neutrality, certainty, control, assertiveness, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness, instrumental skills, public knowledge, discipline, reason, objectivity, and rationality (Skelton, 2001). It is the heterosexual, dominating form of masculinity and is constructed in relation to women and subordinated masculinity. This form of masculinity is achieved and maintained through cultural and institutional practices, particularly the media and the state. It is not something that is embodied within the individual male but is the public face of male power (Skelton, 2001). This is the type of masculinity that is often constructed in the schools as a result of various factors.

One of these factors is that the oppressive behaviors of boys and even male teachers in schools are often overlooked or condoned (Francis & Skelton, 2001). In short, boys are often not taught that it is wrong to degrade people for not living up to social standards. Looking at that point from another side, if young boys position themselves as others to females and they have a female teacher, the likelihood of them taking her seriously when she attempts to correct their hegemonic masculine behavior is relatively small. In fact, that may encourage them to act out even more extremely to assert their dominance over her. Another way to view this issue is the lasting effect of having a dominant female teacher. Males who are at an age of asserting their dominance in the classroom may feel threatened by having a female teacher (whom masculinity teaches they should be dominating) who overpowers him. If he generalizes this feeling of threat to other females in his life, he may spend a great deal of energy in later years trying to show other women that he is dominant.

Another factor is the disciplinary style of male teachers. Francis and Skelton (2001) found that male teachers often discipline young males by questioning their masculinity or showing them up. In fact, they found that boys and men control others' masculine behaviors by questioning their maleness. This is perhaps one of the most salient influences in the elicitation of threats to masculinity. By having their masculinity continually called in question by male students, female students and even teachers, boys are forced to make a public decision on how they want to construct their masculinity. There is no room for silent masculinity in school. They can either conform and try their best to convince others that they are stereotypically masculine or they can choose not to conform and subject themselves to the constant ridicule that will come from not living up to the standards. Young boys are forced to conform to standards of masculinity lest they be compared to females. Every time they are in a social situation that requires them to decide between a stereotypical response and a more well-rounded, perhaps gender-neutral response, they will feel threatened and again have to prove their masculinity.

The behavior of male teachers must be considered by itself as it presents a complicated twist on gender construction in school. Male teachers are simultaneously attempting to construct their own masculinity while contributing to the construction of masculinity in their male students. According to Francis and Skelton (2001), one incentive male teachers have to construct themselves as masculine is that teaching is often considered a soft or feminine profession. They are aware of others' attention to their masculinity and may therefore feel it necessary to be overly masculine to show that they are the opposite of feminine (a male role model). Masculinity is often conveyed by male teachers in the form of behaviors and attitudes but is rarely discussed. Martino (2001) points out that one reason male teachers may not discuss

masculinity in school is that they risk having theirs called into question. Two ways that male teachers use their relations with pupils to construct their masculinity are: (1) positioning themselves as one of the boys (referencing football games and objectifying women) and (2) positioning themselves as others to girls and nonmasculine boys. If this is the display of the boys' male teacher, it is easy to see how the idea of hegemonic masculinity can be conveyed. Similarly to the threat experiences when dominated by female teachers, males who are shown up in class or dominated by male teachers may also spend a great deal of energy in life trying to dominate other men. They constantly fight for that superior position. They look up to their male role model who teaches them that it is okay to objectify women and assert dominance over males weaker than themselves.

One last comment about positioning of male teachers rounds out the argument. Men are often seen as natural disciplinarians and as such are often placed with older students or in places of administrative power (principals, superintendents). For boys who endorse the traditional masculine gender role, seeing men placed in these positions relative to women, who often are more heavily represented in lower grades, may reinforce the idea that men should be dominant and deserve higher positions relative to women. The males who occupy the higher status positions may not in fact be any smarter or more qualified than the females that occupy the teaching positions in lower grades, but the young men who observe the status differential may infer that they are smarter or more deserving of a dominant position. In support, Whitley (1999) found that in-group members (e.g., males) may endorse stereotypes to justify the maintenance of their dominant position. Here, they may perpetuate the stereotype that women are not smart enough to hold higher positions to justify the fact that the male teachers occupy those positions. In turn, threat may be elicited if men don't reach the higher status position they

feel they are entitled to. Recall Hill and Fischer's (2001) demonstration that masculinity predicted general and sexual entitlement. For the masculine boys in the school system, the observation of males in high status positions may serve to sustain this sense of entitlement.

To return to the idea of hegemonic masculinity, we must address how it is constructed. In order for hegemonic masculinity to operate, it must operate in opposition to something else. In some cases this 'other' is femininity. In other cases, hegemonic masculinity operates in opposition to subordinate masculinities. Not all men aspire to the standards of hegemonic masculinity, indeed compliticious masculinity refers to a cluster of masculinities where men reap the benefits of hegemony without actively seeking or supporting it (Skelton, 2001). These men may not display such extreme masculine attitudes and behaviors but they don't actively do anything to stop them either and so are in a neutral position of sorts. A type of masculinity that is in direct contrast to hegemonic masculinity is homosexuality. Constructing a homosexuality identity does not require aggression and physical dominance and so is not considered an appropriate form of masculinity. This form of masculinity is not socially valued and boys reap no benefits in displaying it (Beckett, 2001; Skelton, 2001).

Hegemonic masculinity is a strict standard and its construction contributes to much of the difficulties men have being themselves. Beckett (2001) contends that construction of hegemonic masculinity limits choices for boys because they may be expected to choose masculine subjects to study in school or masculine extracurricular activities. They may not be interested in these and consequently may not do well. This may be the real crisis in school. He believes that boys need to learn about different ways of being boys. I would agree that the coining of the term 'masculinities' as a representation of the fact that there is more than one way to be male was a good start in the direction of eliminating mental health issues by giving

men choices. Being held to an unreasonable standard in any situation can be mentally damaging. Masculinity is no exception.

Another issue in the construction of masculinity in schools is whether single-sex schools provide a better environment than coed schools. Some believe that advocating single-sex groupings might reinforce traditional gender stereotypes (Skelton, 2001), while a study by James and Richards (2003) found many advantages of such an arrangement for boys. Currently, fewer boys than girls graduate from high school, enter college, and earn bachelors and master's degrees. Even at male-dominated institutions, women tend to outperform men academically (James & Richards, 2003). They discuss the idea that coed schools are thought to provide the most social pressure to conform to male stereotypes because of the presence of female students and teachers. This goes back to the idea of positioning oneself as 'other' to females. They argue that boys' schools provide less pressure because the boys can be free to show interest in less traditionally masculine areas of study. As Beckett (2001) advocated, they can be free to learn about different ways of being boys.

Attending a coeducational school, males may feel pressure not to choose subject areas in which females traditionally excel. Females tend to perform better than boys in literature and areas of the humanities, while boys tend to perform better in math and science (James & Richards, 2003). "For many boys, devaluing what girls do better is preferable to feeling inferior" (James & Richards, 2003, p. 137). Feelings of academic inferiority may contribute to classroom bragging and extreme displays of masculinity. If you can't be good at what is actually going on in the classroom, why not call attention to what you are good at—dominance? James and Richards argue that this pressure to outperform may not exist if boys are free to choose subjects that they like or in which they are proficient. As hypothesized,

James and Richards found that "men who had attended boys' schools[2] exhibited more interest in English, reading, and history than did men who attended coed schools" (2003, p. 143). Graduates of boys' schools also had more positive attitudes towards the humanities than did graduates of coed schools. Finally, men who graduated from boys' schools reported more often than coed graduates that they had majored in the humanities in college and that they use communicating and writing skills in their professions. These results could easily be attributed to the fact that these men learned by observation in school that they were free to choose whatever topics interested them. They may have felt less pressure to choose stereotypically masculine topics because there were no females to have to position against. Threat is less likely to be elicited in this environment because boys are not likely to be receiving the message that they must construct masculinity in only one way (i.e. in opposition to surrounding girls). Similar to the effects of the affectionate father, boys' schools create an environment where well-rounded masculinity can be demonstrated, leaving boys with the perception of more options.

Career

One context where men may really feel the effects of treats to their masculinity is in the workplace. Women continue to experience wage discrimination and to be excluded from the most powerful executive positions, exerting less authority than men in the workplace (Carli, 1999). Men also have greater access to social and interpersonal power (defined as having the potential to influence or control others) than women do. Why, then, do men continue to feel powerless and displaced in the workplace? To answer that question, we must first address the fact that people clearly assume that men have more competence than women and are more

[2] Information was not given on how long these boys attended the boys' schools but the questionnaires were mailed to graduates.

deserving of status (Carli, 1999). When women are placed, then, in positions of power, people, particularly men, may have a tendency to believe that women don't deserve to be there. It makes intuitive sense that a man in a position of subordination to a woman in the workplace will feel threat elicited when she is violating expectations about appropriate gender behavior by not being submissive, and he also believes himself to be more competent. Women who appear too assertive, too, confident, or too interested in exerting influence over others are violating those appropriate gender roles. In fact, Carli (1999) conducted a review of the literature on gender and power and explains that, "overt displays of competence and confidence by women can result in rejection, especially from men, whose legitimate power is threatened by such displays in women" (p. 85). Legitimate power is the extent to which an individual and others believe that that individual deserves to exert influence over people. Threat is elicited in men when they see females display roles that they believe are designated for males and power in the workplace is one such role. Accordingly, Carli notes in her review that, subordinates react more negatively to a woman who leads in a male-dominated area such as sports or business.

O'Neil and Egan (1993) assert that patriarchy is one of the organizing principles of our society and that men's assertion of power is often expected and encouraged. In order to appropriately validate their masculinity, men are taught that they must use power over women. For men who are in positions of subordination to women in the workplace, that is considerably more difficult, maybe even impossible. For these men, threat to their masculinity will be elicited as they confront the reality of powerlessness in their career.

Power conflicts occur when one person's increase in power is perceived as decreasing the power of another person. A woman in a position of power at work might necessarily decrease the power of her male subordinate, especially if she was selected for the position over

him or was deemed to be more competent at the job than he. They cannot both be the boss, and by virtue of her gaining that advantage, she decreases his potential power. This may be especially difficult for traditional men to handle. Traditionally, men held the power at work (O'Neil & Egan, 1993). As women increasingly work outside the home, men may feel that they have lost power completely. This is especially probable in light of the fact that men do not generally pick up responsibilities in the household and so will likely not feel that they have gained any power there (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995). There is not necessarily evidence that household responsibility translates into power for women but they generally have a better idea of what occurs in the home. Understandably, men may be left feeling like they do not belong anywhere. This is an important issue because men who feel that their power is threatened by a woman may seek to reestablish his power by devaluing women (O'Neil & Egan, 1993).

According to Richeson and Ambady (2001), high-status group members' (males') attitudes toward low-status group members (females) become increasingly negative as perceived threats to the status of the high-status group increase. A woman holding a position of power over a man in the workplace is an example of such a threat. This suggests that as men's perceptions of the threat of women in the workplace increase, their attitudes toward women will be become more negative. This has quite serious implications, as research has shown that a negative attitude toward women is a correlate of physical aggression toward them (e.g., Lackie & de Man, 1997). Richeson and Ambady (2001) examined male and female reactions to being placed in the role of superior, peer, or subordinate relative to someone of the opposite sex. They predicted that males assigned to the role of subordinate relative to the female would exhibit more negative attitudes toward females compared to males who were assigned to superior role. They found just that: male participants held favorable attitudes toward women

unless they anticipated an interaction in which the female partner was superior. The results of this study suggest that as members of a stigmatized group (in this case, women) move into counter-stereotypical roles, attitudes toward them become more negative. The authors posit that male participants who were made subordinate may have perceived their subordinate role as a threat to the position of males in general and in violation of their beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women (Richeson & Ambady, 2001). I would add that as men believe that they are being further displaced from their position in society, which once revolved around the workplace, their attitudes are likely to be more negative in general—toward themselves and others.

CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Forms of media have long been considered important in the defining and shaping of American culture (Craig, 1992). Indeed, Kimmel (cited in Spangler, 1992) points out that "images of gender in the media become texts on normative behavior, one of many cultural shards we use to construct notions of masculinity" (p. 93). People base gender construction on many variables and even media messages are interpreted by audiences according to their own cultural, social, and, individual circumstances. The result of this mediation of media is that images and messages have a variety of effects based on audience background and thus cannot be analyzed in terms of uniformity of effect.

Athletics

Male athletes are generally presented in a positive light in the media; they are portrayed as manly and forceful as well as mentally and physically powerful (Koivula, 1999). A lot of the coverage of male athletes presents them as natural or in their element, as if they were born to play sports. According to Sabo and Jensen (1992), "male athletes are valorized, lionized, and put on cultural pedestals. They are 'our modern day gladiators'" (p. 174). Indeed, Koivula

proposes that one of the roles of sports in society is the construction and validation of masculinity and male superiority both inside and outside the realm of sport. This is a particularly salient matter in the construction of masculinity because sport is the only type of television programming where the viewing numbers are higher for men than for women (Koivula, 1999). It is important to study the effects of the messages that are being transmitted because media messages may be salient in gender construction.

In a study by Koivula, less than 10% of the airtime devoted to sports and athletes focused on women. There was limited use of statistics and scarce reporting of masculine sports with women athletes. Studies also find that sports with female participants were gender-marked (e.g.,, ladies' golf) to a greater degree than sports with men (Koivula, 1999; Sabo & Jensen, 1992). This differential treatment of sports with female participants presents men in sports as the norm and female athletes as anomalous. Koivula points out that participation in certain forms of competition which include body contact, face-to-face opposition, or moving heavy objects is incongruent to the female stereotype. Marginalization of the female athlete sends the clear signal to men and women that sports are for men and when you engage in activities that are not gender-appropriate, you will be ignored. This valorization of the male athlete also sends men who are not athletes the message that they are not real men. Men who are not interested in sports or are not good at them when they are young and in school may become predisposed to perceiving a threat to their masculinity in any situation where physical prowess becomes central.

Women are not the only ones ignored in sport however. Sabo and Jensen (1992) explain that homosexuality (a subordinate masculinity) is also ignored in sports media. A proportion of all male athletes are gay and there is even a substantial gay presence in some sports such as

weight lifting and bodybuilding, yet discussion of homosexuality is taboo in mainstream sports media. There is something masculine and sacred to many men in athletics and sports media is very protective of that. Nothing is allowed to tarnish the symbolic masculine ritual that sports has evolved into. Sabo and Jensen point out that even when scandals do erupt in the world of athletics, masculinity is saved by making the scandal appear irregular. In general, the "news media consistently contributes to the reproduction of traditional expectations of men and women and to the construction of a social stratification which enhances and naturalizes gender differences" (Koivula, 1999, p. 602). Threat may be elicited whenever men attempt to become involved in an activity that is not traditionally masculine or decide not to be involved in traditionally masculine activities. They will likely receive the same message of ignorance that women and gay men receive: conform or be ignored.

Comic Books

Historically, comic books portray heroes who present images of goodness, power, control, confidence, success, and competence. Most would agree that these are fine qualities for young boys to emulate. However comic books also teach that the way to cope with problems is through violence and action (Pecora, 1992). Ninety-two percent of the readers of comic books are male and 52% of them are under age 16. Pecora contends that comic books send messages of violence, racism and sexism to these young readers and as a result perpetuate the gender stereotyping that they may be learning elsewhere. This is yet another forum where threat may be elicited by giving men the impression that masculinity can only be constructed in one way. Comic books imply that that way is through violence and action. According to the comic book message, one is not truly masculine unless he embodies those characteristics. A man who doesn't embody those characteristics will perceive that his masculinity is being threatened.

Pecora (1992) studied *Superman* comics because of its position as one of the most popular comic series in history. She discusses the role of women in this series and identifies the two polarized roles designated for them: young and buxom or old and frail. They are never equals to men. In *Superman* for instance, Lois Lane fawns over the strong powerful Superman while degrading and dismissing his mild-mannered alter ego Clark Kent. The message to the reader is that Lois is Superman's, if, and when he wants her. Lois is always getting herself into trouble and the strong male character must come to her aid. Pecora explains that violence is used to solve problems and women are either nuisances or victims. I would add that they sometimes function as rewards as well. If the man works hard and proves he is the strongest and the best, he will "win" the woman at the end.

Pecora also points out that the series teaches exclusion as well as sexism. There were no black characters that weren't unskilled labor or residents of the ghetto. Any Italian character that showed up was written to be affiliated with the mob, the Hispanic character was usually a priest, and the Lesbian woman was an unfit mother. There is surely a problem when young boys are being taught that to be masculine, you must be racist and exclude others. Threat could potentially be elicited in men who subscribe to these definitions of masculinity anytime they are faced with a situation in which they must decide whether to exclude someone or not.

Another lesson taught in comics is that to be a man, one must be muscular. Superman was outrageously muscular and the 'bad guys' were all smaller, not to mention that Clark Kent somehow managed to hide his rippling muscles beneath his nerdy, reporting clothes. Threats to masculinity may develop if a male cannot achieve a level of muscularity that makes him intimidating to other males.

Clearly, comic books send the message that to be respected, one must be bigger than the next guy, one must be smarter and braver, one may have to use violence and if the job is well done, a woman will be waiting at the end. The potential for threat here is tremendous. For a man who is not bigger, not necessarily smarter or braver than other men or who does not use violence, the message is basically that he is not masculine. This could result in an extreme perception of threat as he is being told that everything he is does not count in the assessment of masculinity.

Television: Situation Comedies and Police Dramas

Fejes (1992) found that, in television broadcasting men are portrayed more often than women and placed in starring roles more often. They are more likely to be found in action and drama and less likely to be found in sitcoms and soap operas. Men are more likely than women to be shown in high status jobs and are shown less often in home environments. They are also less likely to be shown as married or in a romantic relationship. They are portrayed as more dominant, more violent and most likely to be possessors of power and status (Fejes, 1992). In fact, Fejes found that men portrayed on adult television do not deviate much from the traditional patriarchal notion of men and masculinity. They are powerful, successful and high status. For young males watching these portrayals, the pressure to succeed is unimaginable. In reality, men are lower class, middle class, and upper class and they belong to all ethnic groups. They are not always successful and they certainly are not always single. For many men threat will be elicited when they are being held to an impossible standard. If they cannot be upper class, high status, then they can surely be dominant in other ways.

Even in children's television, males are portrayed as aggressive, constructively engaged in building and planning and less willing to defer to the plans of others. Girls, on the other hand, are shown talking on the phone, reading, and helping with housework (Fejes, 1992).

When aggression is continually affiliated with men, boys may begin to believe that that is the way men are supposed to act. They may then perceive threats to their masculinity if they feel compelled to act in ways not in accordance with the stereotype. According to Spangler (1992), programs targeted at men reinforce a capitalist patriarchy by making men constantly prove their worth through work. While women are supposed to prove their worth through their emotional dealings with men and children, men are taught in watching television that we don't need them to be emotionally expressive; we need them to be successful in the workforce. Men who are economically disadvantaged in youth may develop a predisposition to threat perception. This perception of threat would be elicited if they are unable to fulfill their duty as provider in adulthood.

Hanke (1998) examined the sitcom *Coach* to explore hegemonic masculinity on television. The main character, Hayden Fox, is a caricature of the 'jock'. He is tactless, chauvinistic, self-absorbed and insensitive. Yet somehow he is lovable and being such is forgiven by the audience. This sends the audience the message that Hayden does not have to change and neither does the real-life version of this character. He doesn't have to try to be understanding or look at things from another perspective; being masculine means being chauvinistic and putting your needs first. If Hayden doesn't have to change why should other men? Hanke points out that Hayden is also antagonistic toward men who are sensitive, much like men are in reality. Perceptions of threat may be elicited if a man feels he is too sensitive or perceives that others judge him to be too sensitive. In situations where sensitivity is called for, he may be openly antagonistic to those who display it and those toward whom it is displayed.

Hayden is also openly sexist and antagonistic toward the female coach of the women's basketball team. It sends message that, "if you want to be part of the man's world (sports), you have to put up with sexism."

Spangler (1992) analyzed four decades of television programming and found that male friendships on television have occasionally depicted intimate relationships, but most demonstrated bonding through activity, not emotional disclosure. Male characters in comedies were generally more intimate than males in other genres and interestingly, women make up the majority of viewers of comedies. So although the message that emotional intimacy is okay for men is being sent in some television programming, it is also the programming that the men are not watching.

Television police dramas are another source for constructing gendered identities because they feature so many male characters in so many roles. Scharrer (2001) examined police dramas for that reason and found that instances of violence and aggression have been found to co-occur with portrayals of macho male characters. "Characteristics of the macho orientation are lack of empathy or sensitivity especially in regard to sex; pursuing excitement, adventure, and sensation-seeking; and espousing the belief that violence is normative and acceptable for men" (p. 617). She goes on to explain that violence and aggression is often portrayed on television in a way that may encourage adoption of these behaviors by glossing over tragic events, providing reward or justification, and involving characters with which the audience may identify. These ideas are conveyed to males who may then perceive threats to their masculinity if they don't live up to this ideal of violence and aggression. Whether men perceive threat in these situations is determined by whether or not a predisposition to threat perception has been created. If they have internalized the ideals of traditional masculinity and

value them as an important part of their personality, they will perceive threat when they don't measure up to those ideals. If, on the other hand, they do not consider these ideals particularly important to their core identity, they will not perceive threat in this discrepant situation.

Television characters that are hypermasculine (defined here as displaying exaggerated, narrowly defined masculine qualities) are often involved in antisocial behaviors. Scharrer concludes that male audience members who may also be high on hypermasculinity might identify with the portrayals of hypermasculine characters and this could in turn lead to reinforcement of existing notions about gender as well as potential adoption of aggressive, antisocial behaviors. If males on television are portrayed as more well-rounded and less aggressive, males who are watching would be unlikely to perceive threats to their own masculinity because they would perceive a wider range of options available to them

Advertising

Katz (2003) calls advertising an omnipresent and rich source of gender ideology. Indeed, many people look to advertising for clues as to what is appropriate gender-relevant behavior. Certainly for many men advertising provides reinforcement of the gender ideals that they learn in other areas of their lives. Many studies examining the effects of media on gender ideologies have found that advertising presents extremely gender-stereotypical portrayals of men and women (Katz, 2003; Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997; Fejes, 1992; Strate, 1992). Although researchers tend to agree that advertising presents stereotypical portrayals of men and women, different reasons are offered for why that is. Fejes (1992) offers as an explanation, the advertising industry's need to target. Since they are attempting to sell products that in some cases are only intended for males or only intended for females, they must differentiate between the two sexes in order to make it clear to whom the product is targeted. Sometimes they must go to such extremes as blatant stereotyping in order to avoid the risk of not reaching their target

market. Strate (1992) agrees, explaining that the beer industry relies on stereotypes of the 'man's man' to appeal to a predominantly male audience.

Another explanation is offered by Katz (2003) who says that, "by helping to differentiate masculinity from femininity, images of masculine aggression and violence—including violence against women—afford young males across class a degree of self-respect and security (however illusory) within the more socially valued male role" (p. 352). In this case, it is not the purpose of the advertising that determines the stereotypical content, but the psychological effect intended for the male viewer. These advertisers are seeking to appeal to males' threatened sense of power and control by showing them that if one acts aggressively and violently (and buys our product) he will get the respect he deserves from others. This message is not only physically and psychologically harmful, but also incorrect.

Advertising is harmful to men because it encourages them to be dominant, to seek and maintain power over others, and to loathe and detest all things remotely feminine (Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997). Advertising teaches that physical strength and financial power are all one needs to be a real man and to control desirable women. This ideal is harmful for a couple of reasons. First, not all women are seeking these qualities in a man and if they are, certainly not these qualities in isolation. If men focus too much on physical strength and gaining financial power to the exclusion of other desirable qualities, they may fail to become the kind of well-rounded man that most heterosexual women are interested in meeting. Another reason that this ideal is harmful is that not all men have access to the kinds of advantages and opportunities necessary to become financially powerful or to possess great physical strength. Issues of diversity come into the picture at this point. In their examination of the literature on men of color and gender role strain, Lazur and Majors (1995) report that men of color are considered

foreigners by the dominant culture and are constrained in their attempts to attain power, wealth and success. They are forced to make many choices between their own ethnic culture and the dominant culture in which they desire to be successful. These men may be significantly more likely to perceive threats in their attempts to reach a level of success in certain domains that is unattainable for them. When advertising focuses exclusively on certain traits as 'manly', it is shortchanging men by not allowing them to utilize all of the available options.

When Fejes (1992) examined advertisements, he found that men are generally portrayed as autonomous, shown in a wide variety of jobs, and shown in business settings while women are more often shown in the home. He also found that voice-overs and messages carrying authority are more likely to be male. Men are overrepresented as managers, experts, and technicians and tend to be portrayed in a dominant stance, unsmiling, and not touching one another. Again, these portrayals are sending the message to men that there are certain places they belong and certain places they don't. This dramatically reduces the number of occupational and lifestyle choices men feel are open to them and creates a threat predisposition for those men who do not meet the ideals.

Strate (1992) analyzed portrayals of men in beer commercials, which he argues are "manual(s) in masculinity," or rulebooks for appropriate masculine behavior (p. 78). In beer commercials, hard work and physical labor are often emphasized. Another emphasis is on proving oneself. Beer commercials portray men who are unmindful of risks and laugh off danger in order to prove that they are a 'real' men. He must dominate his environment and then he is rewarded with a beer. In fact, Strate points out that many beers use animals as symbols, representing the untamed, wild man. Research has also found an emphasis on hiding or

controlling emotions in beer commercials and men are shown unhappy more often than women reinforcing the idea that they are supposed to demonstrate control (Strate, 1992; Fejes, 1992).

Katz analyzed portrayals of men in magazine advertising and found several recurring themes. The first theme that emerged was the portrayal of the angry, aggressive, white male as an anti-authority rebel. For this he uses the rap star, Eminem as an example. He is always shown with a grimace, at an angle where his tattoo looks large and easily visible, and usually is displaying some kind of violence (e.g., a chainsaw, a bloodied handprint). These advertisers sell rebellion in a neat little package, sending the message to young men that if you feel angry and rebellious too, the answer is violence.

Another theme is that of violence and sexuality as genetically programmed male behavior. As an example, Katz points out that two leading condom brands are named after ancient warriors (Trojan and Ramses). By linking condoms to violent archetypes, men feel like they are sharing in an ancient ritual of violence and sexuality.

Another theme is the use of the military and sports symbolism to enhance masculine identification. Katz points out that Camel cigarette ads featured Joe Camel wearing a bomber jacket with fighter jets in the background while he stood smoking, sending the message that violence is suave and cool. Another example is Abercrombie and Fitch's use of football in ads to sell their clothes. Using high-profile violent male athletes has long been used to sell products to men that were historically gendered female. It is as if to say, "I hurt people for a living and I use this product so it is okay for you (man) to use it too."

Another theme Katz noticed was the association of muscularity with ideal masculinity. Magazines with a large male readership are filled with advertisements offering men products to build their muscles. Many advertisers also use images of rugged, muscular men to give their

products a masculine feel. Muscles are equated with violent power. As was discussed earlier, Superman was extremely muscular while his alter ego was not. Muscularity is associated with the ideal man in advertising, possibly making small men, or men who are not very muscular feel like they do not meet the standard. Threat is likely elicited for these men when they are confronted with situations where their size becomes salient. Because they are aware that the ideal man is supposedly one who is muscular, they may perceive a threat since they are not.

The last theme that Katz points out is the tendency of advertising to equate heroic masculinity with violent masculinity. Superman is a good example for this one too. He rarely solved problems by talking about them; instead he swooped in and bashed some heads together.

What makes advertising so important is that it is such a potent form of media and has the potential to reach so many individuals. If indeed these messages are affecting the adoption of stereotypical gender-roles, we need to know and to study the effects of these messages. The advertising industry has long defended itself by arguing that it merely reflects preexisting cultural conceptions, but Strate (1992) argues that in this reflection is a reinforcement of these conceptions that cannot be ignored. Everyday men are being sent a message that there is one correct lifestyle choice for them and for the men who internalize that message, threat is elicited in situations where they feel judged for not making the right choice.

To summarize, entertainment has a profound impact on masculinity because of its widespread availability and prescriptive social categories. The entertainment industry also makes it quite clear that those who do not conform to social stereotypes will be punished by showing this punishment on television. Men who don't conform are made fools of and women are ignored in any attempt to portray stereotypically masculine roles. Those in entertainment also maintain their ability to portray stereotypes by pleading that they are merely reflecting

what is already occurring in society. Again, for some men entertainment may merely be a reflection of cultural ideals that has little impact on them personally. However, for men who are sensitive to the perception of threat and for whom these ideals constitute fundamental attributed of the self, threat will be elicited when they perceive that they do not match the standard.

Social Norms

The gender role strain paradigm (Pleck, 1995) dictates that to the extent that parents, teachers, and peers subscribe to traditional gender role ideology, children are socialized accordingly (Levant, 1995). Brooks and Gilbert (1995) theoretically examined men in families. They discussed early development and socialization, marriage and fathering. In summarizing the research they noted that boys have a more intense socialization experience than girls. They are expected to separate sharply from the mother at an early age and experience more pressure to conform to unclearly defined masculine roles. Although society defines certain traits and behaviors as appropriately masculine, it still sends out many mixed messages to men about what roles in life are appropriate for them to fill. Indeed, Pope and Englar-Carlson (2001) point out that one of the major developmental tasks for boys is to sort out the myriad messages that are being sent to them about how to be masculine and construct a unique gender identity. Early research on sex-role attitudes summarized two sets of norms for men: (1) they should cultivate an independent style of achievement and, (2) they should cultivate incompetence in all things considered feminine (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). The threatened male will be one who subscribes to these two norms.

Research has been reported that suggests that males start out more emotionally expressive than females, they are taught to stifle emotion and by age 7 begin to lose their capacity to express their own emotions (Levant, 1995; Pollack, 1998). Boys are trained in

action skills like problem-solving, risk-taking, assertiveness, and remaining calm and not trained in emotional skills such as empathy, awareness of one's feelings, experiencing intense emotions and expression. They are encouraged by parents to play with gender-typed toys; boys play with trucks and mechanical objects while girls play with dolls. Threat may be elicited for boys any time that they do not adhere to these strict, gender-typed social norms. The elicitation of threat for these boys would likely be mediated by how strongly their particular parents encourage these gender-typed behaviors.

There is also a discrepancy in the way parents play with their sons and daughters. Fathers tend to play more roughly with sons than with daughters (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995). Mothers expose their daughters to a wider range of emotion than they do their sons and both parents encourage more emotional expression in their daughters than their sons. Levant (1995) explains that parents speak more about anger with sons than daughters and when disciplining sons, speak more of causes and consequences than of feelings. Young boys are taught that their role is to be emotionally tough and stoic and society begins the "toughening up" process with boys at a young age so that they feel society's pressure to avoid behaviors that might bring them shame (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995; Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001). Parents play more roughly with sons and this builds an early insensitivity to pain and hurt feelings.

All of these norms that are taught at home are reinforced in peer culture. Girls play in smaller groups and emphasize relationship maintenance, while boys play in larger groups and emphasize competition (Levant, 1995). The insensitivity that is developed at home plays out in this environment where the young boy needs it to maintain status in his peer group.

An inherent feature of patriarchal culture is misogyny and young boys are taught to reject all things feminine at all times. Patriarchal power relies on the construction of the

hypermasculine ideal of toughness and dominance (Craig, 1992). It is at this point that the idea of hegemonic masculinity resurfaces. As you recall, hegemonic masculinity is constructed by positioning masculinity as dominant over women and subordinate masculinities (e.g.,, homosexuality). Society teaches that the appropriate masculine role is to be dominant, especially over women but even over other men. Men who feel that they are not dominant over others will likely experience threat that is perpetuated by the rejection of those who dominate them. This perpetuation is the result of a societal context that sends the message that power rightfully belongs to men. The dominant culture legitimizes misogyny by teaching that it is one way to gain and to maintain power as a male.

One of the most salient norms that men are taught to observe is that of physical power. Mishkind, Rodin, Silverstein, and Striegel-Moore (1986) examined the male body ideal and its relationship to the construction of masculinity. The majority of men reported that they would prefer to be mesomorphic (average build) than ectomorphic (thin) or endomorphic (fat) and within the mesomorphic group, most said they would prefer to be hypermesomorphic (muscular average build). They held this body type as the ideal male body type and expressed dissatisfaction with their bodies to the extent that they did not match this ideal.

The authors reported that society as a whole considers mesomorphic physiques better looking and more attractive than nonmesomorphic physiques. They offer as an explanation that the traditional view of masculinity prescribes that men be strong, powerful, even domineering and destructive. They postulate that the muscular physique may be seen as the symbolic embodiment of these characteristics. Similarly, Brooks and Gilbert (1995) described one of society's male role norms as that of protector. Clearly, if the man's job is to protect, he must be in the kind of physical condition that would allow him to do that. Mishkind et al. (1986) also

found that the greater the gap between self-image and ideal image for these men, the lower their self-esteem. As will be discussed later, men who don't live up to their prescribed gender role norms are made to pay a heavy price. The authors noted that there had been an increased male preoccupation with muscularized bodies and hypothesized that in light of increased opportunities for women, males were struggling to define themselves as masculine and one way to do that is to increase muscularity. This increasing interest in this area of masculinity and body image research is demonstrated by increased attempts by researchers to refine measurements of the drive for muscularity (e.g., Cafri & Thompson, 2004; McCreary, Sasse, Saucier, & Dorsch, 2004; Morrison, Morrison, Hopkins, & Rowan, 2004).

Bird (1996) studied the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity through male homosociality. Homosociality refers to the nonsexual attraction held by men (or women) for members of their own sex. In the case of men, it promotes clear distinctions between hegemonic and nonhegemonic forms of masculinity by segregating social groups. "Gender identity originates in early interactions, becoming more stable through the accumulation of meanings attributed by and to the self over time" (Bird, 1996, p. 122). She further explains that homosocial interactions maintain hegemonic masculinity by supporting ideas, behaviors, and activities that fit this ideal and suppressing those that don't. Bird makes an important distinction here between internalized and interiorized ideas about masculinity. When a male internalizes the social ideal of masculinity, it is used to form the core of his personality, whereas interiorization is mere acknowledgement that the ideal exists. I think this distinction is a crucial one being that many men confront social ideals of masculinity everyday, but many are able to construct a more balanced gender identity than those ideals would prescribe. These men realize that they are held to these standards while also realizing their absurdity. Men who

internalize social ideals are more likely to perceive threats to their masculinity because the very core of who they are depends on their successful embodiment of those ideals. On the other hand, men who only interiorize social ideals are less likely to perceive threat if their personalities are not solely based on identification with those ideals. In essence, the well-roundedness of their personality may provide a sort of buffer against perceiving threat since a social failure in one area does not affect their entire personality.

It is not quite that simple however, because men who fail to meet these standards in homosocial relations will generally be punished or ostracized (Bird, 1996; Blakemore, 2003; Brooks & Gilbert, 1995). In Bird's interviews with men they revealed that behaviors typically associated with females are inappropriate in the male homosocial group and they risk loss of status and self-esteem if they fail to compete with other men in the group. Bird concludes that each man understands not only socially shared meanings of masculinity, but also the idiosyncratic meanings that form his own identity. Unfortunately, hegemonic masculinity is continually recreated despite individual conceptualizations that contradict it. Violations fail to produce changes instead violators are punished. It is for this reason that examining the predisposition for the perception of threat is so important. Since the system of gender socialization is unlikely to change it is the male's perception of the socialization process that must be altered. For males who internalize masculine ideals, the predisposition for threat perception is more likely to be created than for males who only interiorize the message. The latter group seems to be aware that there are many options available for constructing masculinity, not only those dictated by societal gender ideals.

Male Responses to Perceptions of Threat

SHAME

One common response of males to perceived threat to their masculinity is shame. According to Thompkins and Rando (2003), "shame may be defined as a painful emotion stemming from negative global evaluations of the self and beliefs about others' perception of the self" (p. 79). Certainly men who have perceived threats to their masculinity have created some sort of negative global evaluation of themselves because they feel that they are not living up to the standard that society has prescribed for them. Indeed, shame occurs when there is a failure to meet goals or societal standards (Thompkins & Rando, 2003). For these men, a shame response develops that leaves them feeling, "exposed, small, passive, and unable" (Ferguson & Eyre, 2000, p. 245; Krugman, 1995). Shame involves a focus for men on their global identities and a tug-of-war between who they are and who they wish to be (Ferguson & Eyre, 2000). Men who have perceived threats believe that there is some discrepancy between appropriate masculinity and the masculinity that they themselves possess. As a result of these discrepancies, men feel ashamed.

According to Kimmel (1997), men are under the constant scrutiny of other men who watch them, rank them, and ultimately either grant or deny their acceptance into the realm of manhood. He believes that shame stems from the fear of other men finding out that one is not really masculine. Correspondingly, Krugman (1995) asserts that nearly all men have knowledge of shame but go to great lengths to keep it from others. Men believe that they must cover up any feminine qualities and are afraid of any humiliation. Kimmel (1997) suggests that shame results when men realize that they are afraid of humiliation. Since men are not stereotypically supposed to be afraid, this lends further evidence to the male that he is not as masculine as he should be and thus the shame response is strengthened. In fact, Kimmel makes the bold assertion that, "what we call masculinity is often a hedge against being revealed as a

fraud, an exaggerated set of activities that keep others from seeing through us, and a frenzied effort to keep at bay those fears within ourselves" (Kimmel, 1997, p. 233). So after perceived threat is elicited in the male, the shame response is activated and becomes strengthened as the male tries desperately to keep others from perceiving what he perceived, that is, a discrepancy between appropriate masculinity and his own masculinity.

Kimmel (1997) also points out the struggle between power and powerlessness confronted by most men today. The feminist critique that men are the dominant and powerful group often goes unheard because individual men do not see themselves as holding any power. Kimmel explains that men's feelings of shame arise from the "discontinuity between the social and psychological" and are the feelings of men who were "raised to believe themselves entitled" to feel powerful yet do not feel it (1997, p. 238).

Hoglund and Nicholas (1995) explain the shame experience in terms of viewing the self to be "inferior, defective and helpless" (p. 142). They argue that a person feels exposed when he or she experiences shame, and this resembles Kimmel's argument that when men feel shame, they are actually afraid of humiliation.

Because the experience of shame has been linked to anger, resentment, and hostility, Hoglund and Nicholas (1995) were interested in examining the relationship between college students' exposure to abusive environments and their experience of shame, guilt, and anger. They hypothesized that those with a greater exposure to abusive environments would score higher on a measure of shame than those with less exposure to such environments. They found that reported greater exposure to emotional, but not physical abusiveness was related to higher levels of shame. They also found that those who reported being exposed to higher emotional abusiveness were more likely to outwardly express their anger either physically or verbally.

According to Hoglund and Nicholas (1995), results lend support to the idea that shame-prone individuals have difficulty with anger expression and may tend to keep angry feelings bottled up. Indeed, shame has been linked to aggression (Thompkins & Rando, 2003) and called a driving force in domestic violence (Krugman, 1995). As we will review shortly, hypermasculine behaviors often result from the bottling up of shame feelings.

According to O'Neil, Good and Holmes, (1995), gender role conflict is a "psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others" (pp. 166-167). When men experience gender role conflict around the expression of emotion or balancing or different spheres of their lives, they appear more prone to experience shame. Considering our previous analysis of threat elicitation in the workplace, at school, or within intimate or family relationships, shame is prone to be experienced anytime men experience a threat to their masculinity.

Krugman (1995) explains that "normative male socialization relies heavily on the aversive power of shame to shape acceptable male behavior and attitudes and leaves many boys shame-sensitive" (p. 93). This is unfortunate since Krugman also outlines the many adaptive roles of shame. Shame plays an adaptive role by helping integrate the self into the social world. It functions as self-awareness or an internal gauge of our own measurement against social standards. According to Krugman, good shame socialization creates the proper balance between too much vulnerability and too much aggression. "Well-socialized shame responses facilitate the mediation of conflict without recourse to violence" (Krugman, 1995, p. 114). Perhaps the link that was established between shame and the outward display of aggression and violence failed to take into account the possibility that there are different types of shame and that some serve an adaptive purpose. But how is it determined whether shame will be used by

the male adaptively or maladaptively? Krugman observes that male gender socialization mitigates against the successful integration of shame into the self, leaving males extremely sensitive to shame states. By teaching men that they are supposed to be independent and self-assured, society prohibits men from expressing their shamed feelings. Expressing shame can be adaptive because it may aid in the resolution of whatever caused the shame in the first place. Men who do not express their shame may instead suppress it or channel it through other outlets, such as anger. Men who feel threatened have apparently been socialized to use shame in maladaptive ways, sometimes transforming shame into something much worse, like violence.

As noted above, family is an extremely salient source of learning about gender and gender roles. Krugman (1995) notes that in families where boys are subjected to shaming, the self must adopt extreme protective measures and true feelings begin to be hidden. I would call homes where boys are shamed emotionally abusive, and we saw earlier that higher levels of emotional abuse can lead to difficulty expressing emotion and a tendency to express anger outwardly. As a result of feeling vulnerable in these families, shame-as-humiliation remains close at hand and, Krugman believes, can easily become humiliated rage at women who are seen as controlling. According to Richeson and Ambady (2001), attitudes toward low-status group members (women) become more negative as perceptions of threat to high-status group members (men) increase. Controlling women may understandably be perceived as threats to the men around them. The rage may be directed at these women at work, but will more likely be directed toward those in the home where a male experiencing these kinds of feelings might be likely to take them out on a spouse or family member. Many men remain highly reactive to shame and react with compensatory behaviors like aggression and violence. The picture becomes clearer as to why this is such an important issue. If perceived threats to masculinity

indeed lead to feelings of shame and feelings of shame can be projected out of the self as anger, aggression, and violence, it is important to intercept these perceived threats before they can be internalized causing harm to the male and possibly those around him. Now, let us examine another, related response to threat: hypermasculinity.

HYPERMASCULINITY

Another common response to threat and even a transformation of the shame response is hypermasculinity. Hypermasculinity "is an example of extreme adherence to the masculine gender role" (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002, p. 361). Hypermasculinity is defined by Mosher and Sirkin (1984) as a personality trait that predisposes men to engage in behaviors that assert physical power and dominance in interactions. They go on to say that, "any situation that challenges or threatens masculine identity activates this structure, thereby motivating and organizing the personality for participation in hypermasculine behaviors" (p. 152). For the purposes of this paper, hypermasculinity is being used to refer to this set of behaviors and not to the personality construct, since it is being discussed as a response to threat.

Hypermasculine men are said to commit acts of violence to validate their masculinity and to replace feminine emotions (shame, fear, distress) with the more acceptable masculine emotion of anger (Downs & Gold, 1997). The purpose of a study by Parrott and Zeichner (2003) was to examine the link between hypermasculinity and physical aggression toward women. They had male participants engage in a competitive task with a female opponent to determine what role threat from a female played in the link. They found that men high on Mosher and Sirkin's (1984) measure of hypermasculinity displayed higher levels of physical aggression than did men low on the measure. They posited that the female opponent in an adversarial context may have enhanced the salience of the threat leading to higher levels of

displayed aggression. This is a very important assertion being that the feeling of threat may be elicited in men when they are placed in subordinate (possibly adversarial) positions to women in the workplace. If it is true that this positioning of men and women as adversaries can lead to aggression when the man perceives a threat, there are very serious real-world implications for this research. Indeed, Parrott and Zeichner (2003) explain that, "men who possess high levels of hypermasculinity may be predisposed to feel particularly threatened when provoked by a woman and consequently would likely become physically aggressive with little delay" (p. 77). Men may be more likely to be aggressive when they are placed in competitive situations with women, especially if they find those women threatening.

Rape and abuse are other behaviors related to hypermasculinity that have to do with aggression toward women. Downs and Gold (1997) distinguish power rape as resulting from a perceived challenge by a woman that activates an offender's underlying feelings of inadequacy (shame). The men in their study who had reported the use of force or threat in intimate relationships were more sensitive to the power element in the relationship. They also more often felt belittled than the nonaggressive men. Here is where shame enters the picture again. If these men have already activated the shame response by feeling threat elicited in their interactions with strong women, feeling belittled in a particular interaction only serves to strengthen that shame response and intense shame has frequently been related to rage (Krugman, 1995).

Men are socialized to develop power and control strategies that discourage expressions of vulnerability. These stereotyped roles are one explanation for men's violence against women and rape, and other sexual violence can serve to deny vulnerability (Downs & Gold, 1997; Eisler, Franchina, Moore, Honeycutt, & Rhatigan, 2000). Eisler, Franchina, Moore, Honeycutt,

and Rhatigan (2000) point out that losing control to a woman is aversive (shameful) and may be rectified by restoring the sense of control through abuse. In fact, Eisler and Skidmore (1987) found that being in a subordinate position relative to women was a major source of gender role stress (a kind of threat) for men. A strong need for power is even associated with physical abuse to resolve problems with partners (Eisler et al., 2000)

Jakupcak, Lisak, and Roemer (2002) argue that men with a "macho" self-schema (defined similarly to hypermasculine) may exhibit socially harmful behaviors in an attempt to conform to their own definition of appropriate masculinity. Supportingly, Eisler et al. (2000) point out that when a man who scores high on the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987) "appraises an interaction involving his female partner as negatively challenging his construal of how he should enact his masculine gender role, the resultant stress or threat is aversive" and he may respond with aggression (p.34).

An important influence on male physical and sexual violence toward women is the belief system of the dominant culture. Traditional gender roles encourage men to be violent in the name of masculinity and the traditional sexual script indicates that the male should be oversexed, controlling and powerful. Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny (2002) define the feminist sociocultural view as one that believes that the male-dominated structure is maintained in our society in part by sexual violence against women. Though this may be true, few would agree that cultural values alone dictate whether a man will perpetrate sexual violence. Indeed, Murnen et al. point out that traditional masculinity does not inevitably guide men's behavior nor does it inevitably lead to sexual aggression. They hypothesized instead that only extreme forms of masculinity (hypermasculinity) would be strongly related to the perpetration of sexual aggression. They also hypothesized that to the extent that men agree with an extreme form of

masculinity, they are more likely to be sexually aggressive toward women. Likewise, Lackie and de Man (1997) report that sexually aggressive men tend to score high on measures of masculinity and tend to adhere to traditional beliefs about the role of women. Murnen et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis including 39 studies that included 11 measures of masculine ideology to determine how strongly the measures related to sexual aggression. They found that all but one measure was significantly associated with sexual aggression (for details of included studies and measures, see Murnen, et al., 2002).

It is extremely important to understand the role that perceiving threat plays in the eliciting of the shame response because, internalized and unacknowledged, that response can be projected out of the individual as verbal, physical and sexual aggression. Men need to be taught to recognize and seek help for these kinds of internalizations and projections.

LACK OF HELP-SEEKING

Perhaps one of the most psychologically detrimental responses to perceiving threat is lack of help seeking. "Men's relative reluctance to seek help stands in stark contrast to the range and severity of problems that affect them" (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Indeed men are in great need of a wide range of physical and mental health services that they are not seeking. Good, Dell, and Mintz (1989) point out that help-seeking is incongruent with the socialized masculine ideals of autonomy and self-reliance. As we have discussed previously, many men are threatened by being in a position of subordination to a woman. It is aversive to them and may cause them to experience shame. If that is the case it is easy to see why a man who is already struggling with these feelings may be reluctant to put himself in another position of subordination as that of patient or client.

Good et al. (1989) reported that gender-typed men were less willing to seek help than androgynous men. As men's values regarding the male role became less traditional, their views of psychological help-seeking became more positive. This establishes a rather direct link between men's internalization of the societal standards and their willingness to seek help. If a male is in a position where threat has been elicited and he has responded with shame or hypermasculine behaviors, the likelihood of his further devaluing himself as a male by admitting that he failed at meeting his masculine responsibilities is small. A more reasonable assumption is that he would begin experiencing more intense shame that may lead to more rage.

We have discussed before and Blazina and Watkins (1996) agree that the response of the traditional man to threat is withdrawal and/or anger. We also discussed earlier that men do not want other men to know that they feel fearful or distressed (Kimmel, 1997; Krugman, 1995). It is reasonable to argue that the withdrawn, angry man will not decide to seek help for what he considers are his masculine failures. From a power perspective, it is simple to understand that the lack of perceived power men anticipate possessing in the therapeutic relationship may make them more reluctant to seek help (Blazina & Marks, 1996; Blazina & Watkins, 2001).

The type of therapy also makes a difference in how likely men say they are to seek psychological help. Blazina and Marks (1996) found that men rated a psychoeducational therapy group more positively than individual talk therapy. Perhaps men are not uncomfortable with therapy per se but with their perception of therapy as a place where one talks about his emotions. Talking about emotions is considered feminine and a sign of weakness to many men and is in direct opposition to male gender role socialization (Blazina & Marks, 1996) Indeed,

men who scored higher on the MGRS scale, viewed help-seeking more negatively than did men who scored lower. O'Neil (1982) contends that fear of the feminine is the very root of gender role conflict (GRC) and therapy focusing on emotion may just be considered feminine to some men. Wisch, Mahalik, Hayes, and Nutt (1995) found that men who scored high on GRC who viewed an emotion-focused counseling videotape indicated significantly more negative attitudes toward seeking psychological help than those who viewed a cognition-focused videotape and men who scored low on GRC. Perhaps if men were more aware of the range of therapies available to them, they would view therapy more favorably.

Although it helps in explaining broad, male help-seeking behavior, Addis and Mahalik (2003) cite some limitations to the masculine gender role socialization paradigm. One of these limitations is that it is not prepared to handle within-person and across-situation variability. At various points in this review, we have discussed that these principles cannot be applied to all men in all situations, and I think that this is an important limitation to keep in mind. Men do vary in their level on endorsement of masculine gender roles and in their responses to threat in their individual lives. Addis and Mahalik (2003) point out that "masculinity can be understood as a process that is actively created and confirmed by men as they behave in potential help-seeking contexts" (p. 9). I would agree, adding that from context to context the construction of masculinity can change not only for the individual male but also in what is considered to be a socially appropriate masculine response.

Addis and Mahalik (2003) conclude by proposing a "model of men's help-seeking that uses social psychological theory to integrate the masculine gender role socialization paradigm with social constructionist and feminist analyses of masculinity" (p. 9). Included in the model are perceptions of normativeness of the problem, the perceived ego centrality of the problem,

characteristics of potential helpers, characteristics of the social groups to which individual men belong and perceived loss of control.

This is an area in which clear and decisive research is needed to determine what can be done to increase the number of men who view help-seeking positively and so are likely to take advantage of the resources available to them.

Directions for Intervention and Future Research

INTERVENTIONS

Clearly, there are wide and varying implications for threat perception in men's lives. The perception of threat may be elicited in many contexts and has the potential to be quite debilitating. Men may react with feelings of shame, they may abuse themselves or others, and perhaps most importantly, they may refuse to seek psychological help for the array of emotional problems that they are experiencing. Let us take a look at some of the possible interventions that may be helpful in reducing or removing perceptions of threat and its impact on men's lives.

Can we help parents and educators to learn new ways of relating to males to reduce or remove threat?

Pollack (1998) outlined five guidelines for men working with boys to understand them and get past the mask of masculinity. The first guideline is to become sensitive to the early signs of boys' masking of their feelings. When they try to pretend that nothing is wrong or begin to act out hurt feelings in other ways, try to be aware that this is the beginning of a masking process. The second guideline is to learn new ways of talking to boys so that they don't feel ashamed or afraid to reveal their feelings. This may involve replacing questions such as, "are you hurt by something?" to questions like, "what is going on?" A third guideline is to

accept a boy's own emotional schedule and do not force it along. Let him know that you are interested in finding out what is going on but do not make him talk before he is ready. Those working with boys should also connect with them through action. Boys are likely to reveal their feelings when involved in activities. The final guideline Pollack offers is to show boys that other men have been successful at removing the mask. It is important for them to know that they need not be ashamed to reveal their emotions and that other men used to feel fearful and have overcome that fear.

According to Pope and Englar-Carlson (2001), there are several ways that the father can help to prevent violence from becoming his son's response to threat. One of the most important ways a father can prevent the creation of a fragile male identity in the first place is to model a diversity of male behaviors as opposed to only stereotypic behavior. The point has been made before and applies here as well that boys need to learn that masculinity can be constructed in many ways. They need to see non-stereotypic behavior modeled by men that they trust so that they know they have options to choose from in the construction of their own masculinity. Fathers can also develop time that is free of violence and an open forum for discussing feelings about violence. Fathers can also support their son's innate ability to empathize instead of quelling that ability. Boys are born with the ability to empathize and fathers should show their empathetic side so sons know it is okay to show theirs.

Educators are also important in the masculine construction process and should explore issues of gender construction and sexuality as part of teacher training (Francis & Skelton, 2001). Francis (2000) argues for the necessity of teachers challenging their pupils' homophobic and misogynist remarks. Ignoring these remarks can perpetuate intolerance and create an

atmosphere of exclusion of ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities. Also, by ignoring these discriminatory comments, boys may get the message that they are normal and appropriate.

Teachers must also be cognizant of their own attitudes toward gender and sexuality. Pope and Englar-Carlson (2001) advocate that teachers demonstrate an attitude of acceptance and tolerance to their students. They should be affirming of different racial backgrounds and of sexual minorities as well as including information about such people in their class lessons. It is important that students are taught to value differences in others and that there is no inherent hierarchy of masculinities or genders (Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001). They also believe that diversity training should be integrated into students' education as primary prevention of some of these negative attitudes. They believe that school systems need to do a better job incorporating psychoaffective education into the curriculum. This type of education would focus more on emotional intelligence and how to empathize with other students. The researchers criticize that the schools focus too much on separating students into winners and losers. Men who experience threat in environments such as those are likely to respond in a violent manner. Teaching students to accept one another and not to alienate those who are not stereotypically masculine would curb some of this violence by reducing the threat felt by those who are different.

Finally, teachers need to think critically and interrogate their own concepts of masculinity while helping students to interrogate theirs (Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001). Martino (2001) offers several suggestions for questions that can be asked in order to help boys understand what masculinity means to different people and the options they have in the construction of their own masculinity. Martino's questions are designed to get people thinking about what masculinity means to them and others and how boys are expected to prove their

masculinity. They also involve critically evaluating who is imposing masculine stereotypes, what they are, what will happen if they do not act in accordance with them and what life might be like for the other sex. I think these are important questions and that everyone should evaluate what role gender plays in their lives. Males especially should evaluate those roles and be comfortable that the construction of masculinity that they adhere to is fitting for them.

Can we help counselors learn ways to make psychological help more appealing to men and reduce threat in the counseling process?

Wisch, Mahalik, Hayes and Nutt (1995) suggest that counselors begin by educating men about the variety of counseling options available to them. Many people in general have stereotypical views on psychology and on counseling. If men are subscribing to those stereotypes, they may think that counseling is about lying on a couch and opening up to a counselor and confiding all of one's deepest emotions. For men, to do so would be to act in opposition to the masculine stereotype since that involves rejecting all emotions except anger. Counselors need to work hard to give accurate impressions of the counseling process and to show men that there are a variety of forms of counseling and that many forms put the client in control. Men may be more in favor of a counseling process in which they feel responsible for their own progress.

Another role of the counselor is to treat men with respect once they are involved in counseling. The counselor should work to avoid labeling problems pathologically (Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant, 2002). They should work to help men understand the process of gender socialization and the strain that can result from this process, as feminist therapists have been doing for three decades. Men are probably more likely to look favorably upon the counseling process when they have been treated as though their problems were normal. They are also less

likely to perceive threats to their masculinity when the counselor is treating them as if they are normal than when they perceive that the counselor too is judging them in comparison with stereotypes. Counselors can also work with men to redefine their masculinity to include emotionality and preclude aggression or abuse.

Can we help society to modify existing gender meanings to offer men a variety of ways to construct masculinity, thus reducing threat?

Bird (1996) explained that homosociality maintains hegemonic masculinity by having males continually evaluate other males to see if they are appropriately masculine. Changes in the individual male's conception of masculinity fail to produce changes in the social norms because they still adhere to hegemonic masculinity in public. In essence, where it counts they are appropriately masculine. Bird points out that when individual departures from hegemonic masculinity occur privately, they do not challenge the social construction of masculinity and as a result, hegemonic masculinity persists. In this view, it is imperative that men publicly challenge those constructions of masculinity that they do not agree with. When they silently go along in public, others are led to believe that they endorse masculinity in its socially constructed form.

Bird also argues that the goal yet to be accomplished is the degenderization of meanings. By this she means that emotional detachment, competitiveness and the sexual objectification of women have come to be identified as criteria by which being a man is measured. We must separate specific personality characteristics from their current association with a particular gender in order to begin evaluating people on an individual basis. This individual evaluation should theoretically leave men freer to construct their masculinity in a unique way.

In closing, Levant (1995) defines three components involved in the reconstruction of masculinity. First, we must validate the skills that men learn and the ways they have of showing care and concern in order to help them recapture some of their lost pride. Second, men need opportunities to learn some of the skills women learn as girls (e.g., emotional empathy and self-awareness). These will help men balance their emotional lives so that not all emotions are channeled through as anger. The last task of men in the reconstruction of their masculinity is to use these skills to do the emotional work involved in overcoming shame, absent fathers and the loss of mothers. In other words, men must use the new skills they learn to construct a new emotionally active side of their identity and to actively feel past events that they may have shut out.

FUTURE RESEARCH

While much has been done to examine the development of masculine identity and the development of masculine gender role conflict and stress, there are still holes to be filled. Following are some directions for further research.

1. More research is needed on the contribution of marital conflict to masculine development. Specifically, how does conflict between parents who are still in a marriage together affect any children in that marriage and sons in particular? Research in this area may help define what exactly it is about the in-home, parental relationship that contributes to the gender role development of the children. Is it the display of traditional gender roles within the family context? Is it the loving or affectionate display of respect for the opposite sex, whether the gender roles are traditional or not? How would growing up with same-sex parents influence a boy's masculine development? Would this relationship be different for two fathers versus two mothers? Research would help to explain this dynamic more clearly.

2. Another important area to research is the relationship between siblings and masculine development. Is having an older brother versus an older sister likely to contribute positively to the masculine identity development of a young boy? Does having an older brother versus a younger brother change the gender development of the young boy? Is having an older brother likely to create a predisposition to threat in the young boy because of pressure to conform? Finally, is there a relationship between the gender role ideology of male siblings and, if so, what is it? Twin studies might also be helpful. Research about siblings would help to highlight what or who in the home becomes salient for a young boy as he constructs his masculinity.
3. It might also be interesting to examine the effects of different types of music played in the home on the masculine development of the son. Will it make a difference in the creation of a predisposition to threat if a boy's parents play music that objectifies women versus music that is respectful to women or music by female artists? Again, this would help to clarify what it is in the home that males utilize in constructing their masculinity. Also, is there any possibility of predicting what type of masculine ideology a particular male endorses by finding out what kind of music he listens to? Does music serve only to reinforce existing gender beliefs (e.g., objectification of women is okay) or does it have the power to change beliefs as well?
4. Examining the relationship between the gender role identities, attitudes, and behaviors of the mother and that of her son may lead to a richer understanding of the mother's role in masculine development and in threat development. Does a traditionally feminine mother facilitate her son's masculine development more so than a masculine or androgynous mother? How does parenting style interact with masculinity-femininity of the parent to

affect the child's gender development?

5. We should return to Biller's (1971) idea of the overprotecting mother. How does the overprotecting mother affect the son's masculine development in father-absent versus father-present homes? How does an overprotecting father affect the son's masculine development?
6. What is the effect of extended family on masculine identity development? How is masculinity constructed when several models are present?
7. We must certainly continue male body image research. It would be interesting to longitudinally examine the change in body image satisfaction over the years from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. It would also be interesting to examine whether men with a negative image of their bodies are more or less likely to perpetrate physical or sexual violence against women. For example, are men with a negative body image more likely to experience threat? In the examination of the literature, it became clear that one societal criterion for masculinity is muscularity. Threat has been defined as the perception of lack of compliance with social standards. If men are not satisfied with their bodies (lack of compliance with social standard), they may experience threat. If so, will experiencing that threat make them more likely to physically or sexually abuse women?
8. We should definitely be studying children's television programming and its effects on the masculine development of the children viewing the programming. In particular we should study amount of exposure to stereotyped programming on television and what effect that has on the adoption of gender-stereotypical attitudes and behavior in children. Does increased exposure to stereotyped programming on television result in increased negative affect toward those who do not act in gender-stereotypical ways?

9. We need to conduct more research on male-male friendships. In what ways are they beneficial to men? Under what circumstances might these friendships preclude or facilitate the adoption of more healthy gender socializations? Might female-male friendships buffer against unhealthy gender dynamics like threat and discrimination?
10. More empirical research is needed to develop ways to improve work relations between men and women in traditionally masculine professions, such as law, medicine, and sports. What kinds of educational programs might be effective in breaking down the gender barrier?
11. How can educational institutions make education beneficial for males and females? Is separate schooling preferable for boys and girls, just boys, or is coeducational schooling better for all? Within a coeducational environment, how can schools foster respect for both genders? How can the role of teachers be redefined to include sensitizing each gender to the struggles of the other gender? Can gender be critically examined in school to provide a clearer picture for males and females on what gender means to them and others?
12. One of the areas where research has been conducted (e.g., Majors & Mancini Billson, 1992; Ruiz, 1981; Sue & Sue, 1993) and should continue to be conducted is diversity. We need more research studying how gender role conflict and strain are related to issues of ethnicity, sexual minorities, and people with disabilities. We need to examine the interaction between socioeconomic status and gender to determine threat elicitation in men occurs more frequently in low-income men than high-income men or vice versa.
13. More research is needed to assess male and female attitudes toward different types of psychological services. It is important to assess female attitudes as well since they may have influence on men in their lives and be helpful in the decision-making process when it comes to pursuing psychological help.

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